

SPORTS REVIEW

Spring 1982

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Wrestling

1982 ANNUAL

Exclusive!

**Harley Race's Plan
To Control
Wrestling ...**



FIRST FLAIR ...



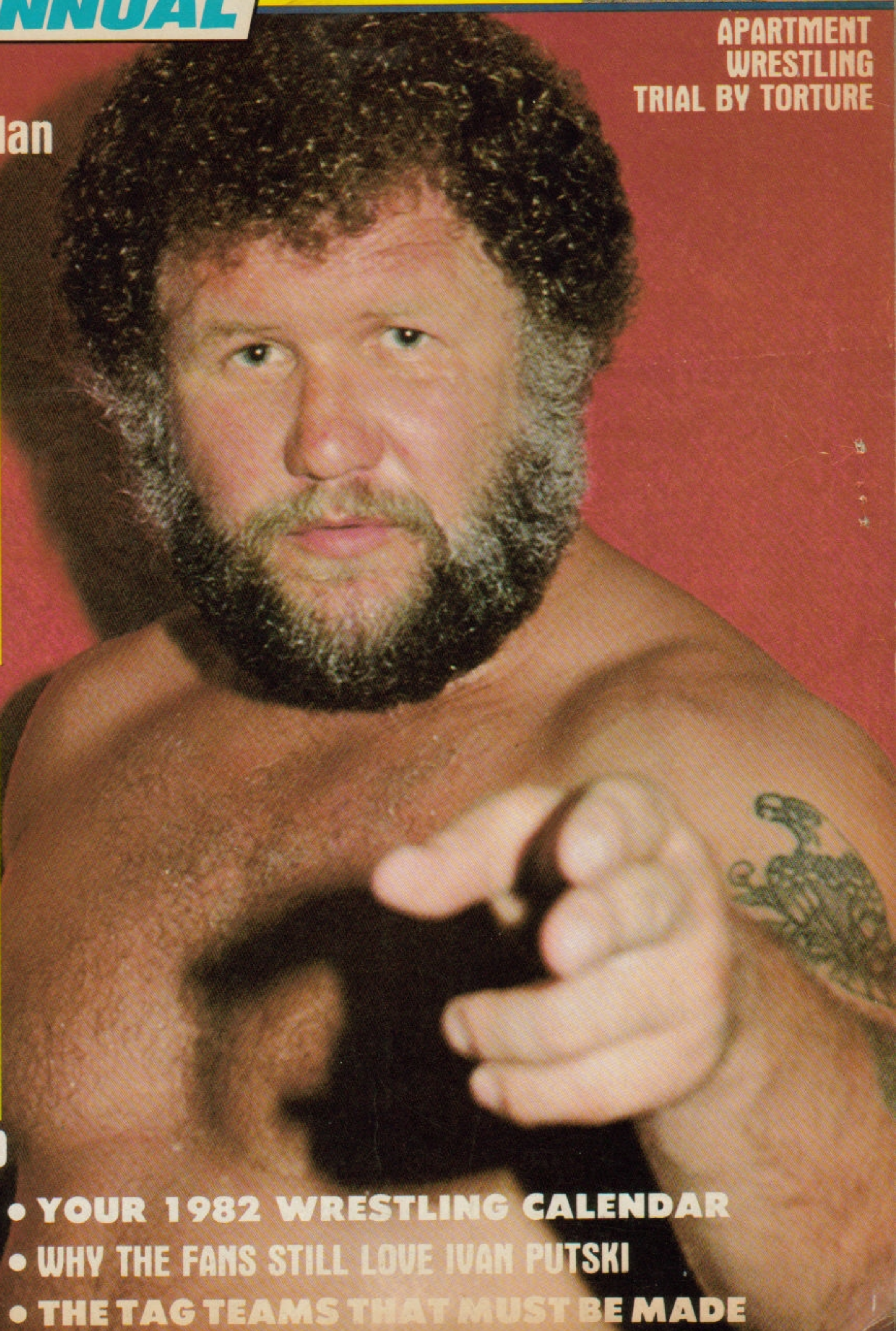
THEN BACKLUND



- YOUR 1982 WRESTLING CALENDAR
- WHY THE FANS STILL LOVE IVAN PUTSKI
- THE TAG TEAMS THAT MUST BE MADE



**APARTMENT
WRESTLING
TRIAL BY TORTURE**



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Champion: BOB BACKLUND

- 1—GREG VALENTINE
- 2—ADRIAN ADONIS
- 3—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
- 4—TONY ATLAS
- 5—MIL MASCARAS
- 6—JESSE VENTURA
- 7—KILLER KHAN
- 8—PEDRO MORALES
- 9—PAT PATTERSON
- 10—KING KONG MOSCA

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL

- 1—HULK HOGAN
- 2—TITO SANTANA
- 3—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
- 4—CRUSHER
- 5—KEN PATERA
- 6—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 7—SHEIK ADNAN AL-KAISSIE
- 8—BOBBY DUNCUM
- 9—GINO HERNANDEZ
- 10—GREG GAGNE

MOST POPULAR

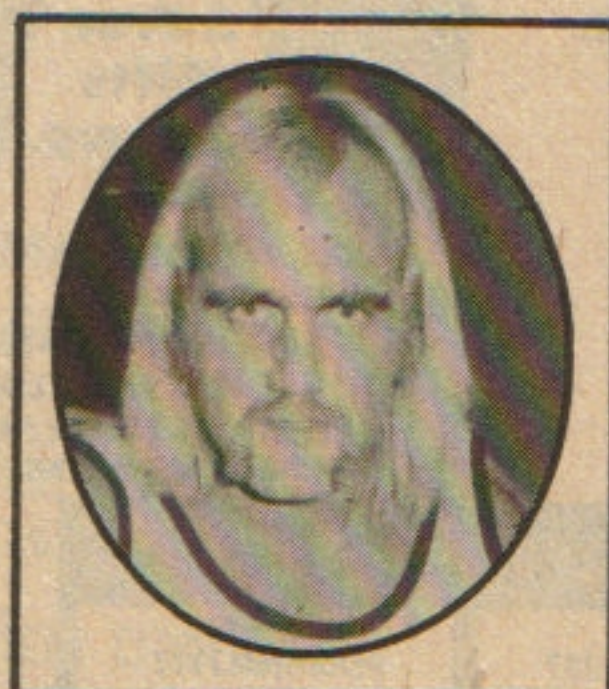
- 1—TOMMY RICH
- 2—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 3—BOB BACKLUND
- 4—DUSTY RHODES
- 5—MIL MASCARAS
- 6—JERRY BRISCO
- 7—RICK STEAMBOAT
- 8—TED DiBIASE
- 9—MR. WRESTLING II
- 10—TONY ATLAS



ADRIAN ADONIS



JACK BRISCO



HULK HOGAN



TOMMY RICH

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Champion: RIC FLAIR

- 1—SGT. SLAUGHTER
- 2—TOMMY RICH
- 3—RODDY PIPER
- 4—THE SPOILER
- 5—KEN PATERA
- 6—JACK BRISCO
- 7—HARLEY RACE
- 8—DUSTY RHODES
- 9—TED DiBIASE
- 10—JERRY BRISCO

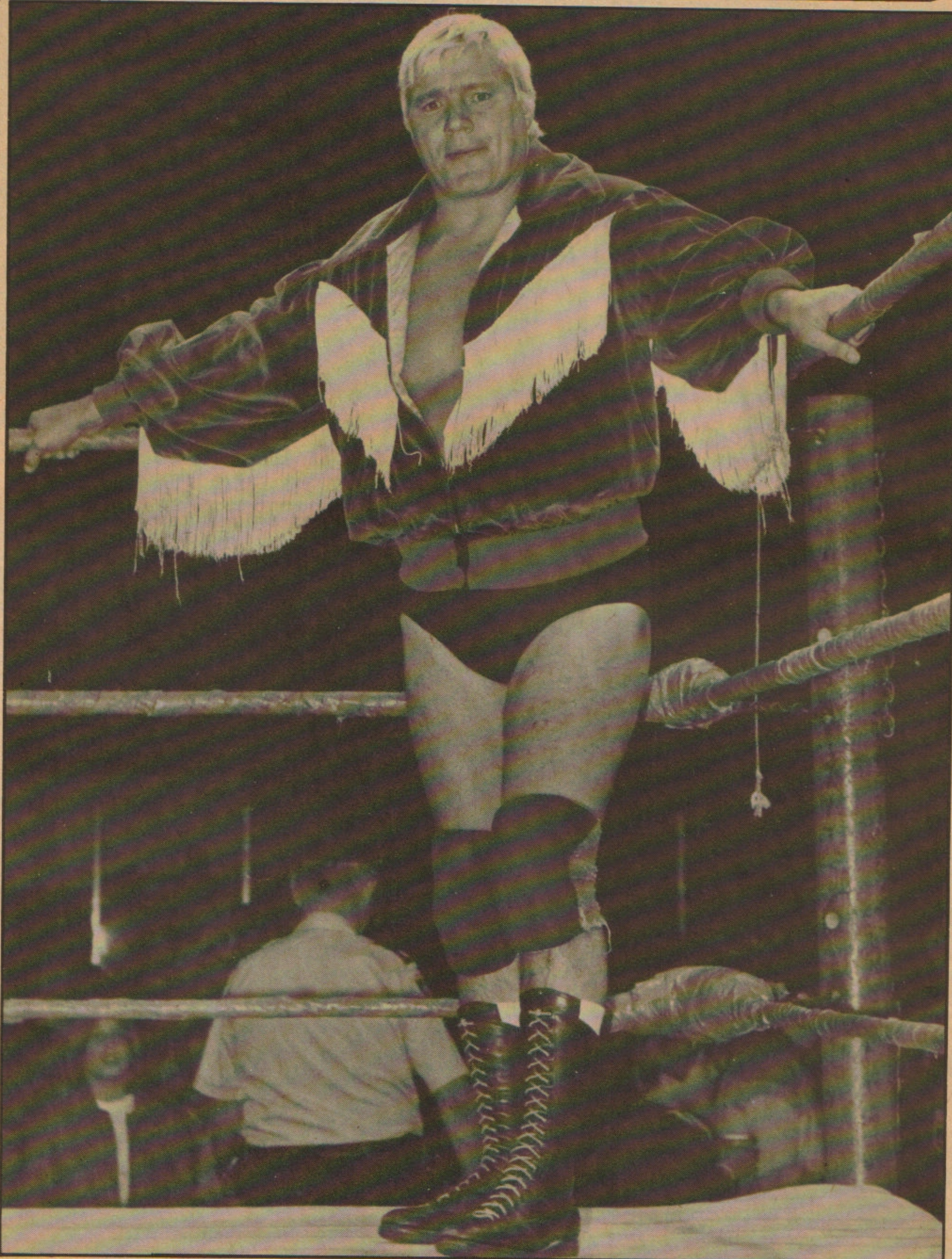
TAG TEAMS

- 1—MR. FUJI & MR. SAITO
- 2—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
- 3—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL
- 4—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
- 5—BOB & BRAD ARMSTRONG
- 6—NIKOLAI VOLKOFF & CHRIS MARKOFF
- 7—BOBBY DUNCUM & KEN PATERA
- 8—MIKE GEORGE & JUNKYARD DOG
- 9—TULLY BLANCHARD & GINO HERNANDEZ
- 10—DOUG VINES & JEFF SWORD

MOST HATED

- 1—KEN PATERA
- 2—SGT. SLAUGHTER
- 3—RODDY PIPER
- 4—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
- 5—KEVIN SULLIVAN
- 6—GREG VALENTINE
- 7—EDDY MANSFIELD
- 8—JOHN STUDD
- 9—HARLEY RACE
- 10—ERNIE LADD

SPORTS REVIEW ANNUAL BONUS PINUP #1



PAT PATTERSON

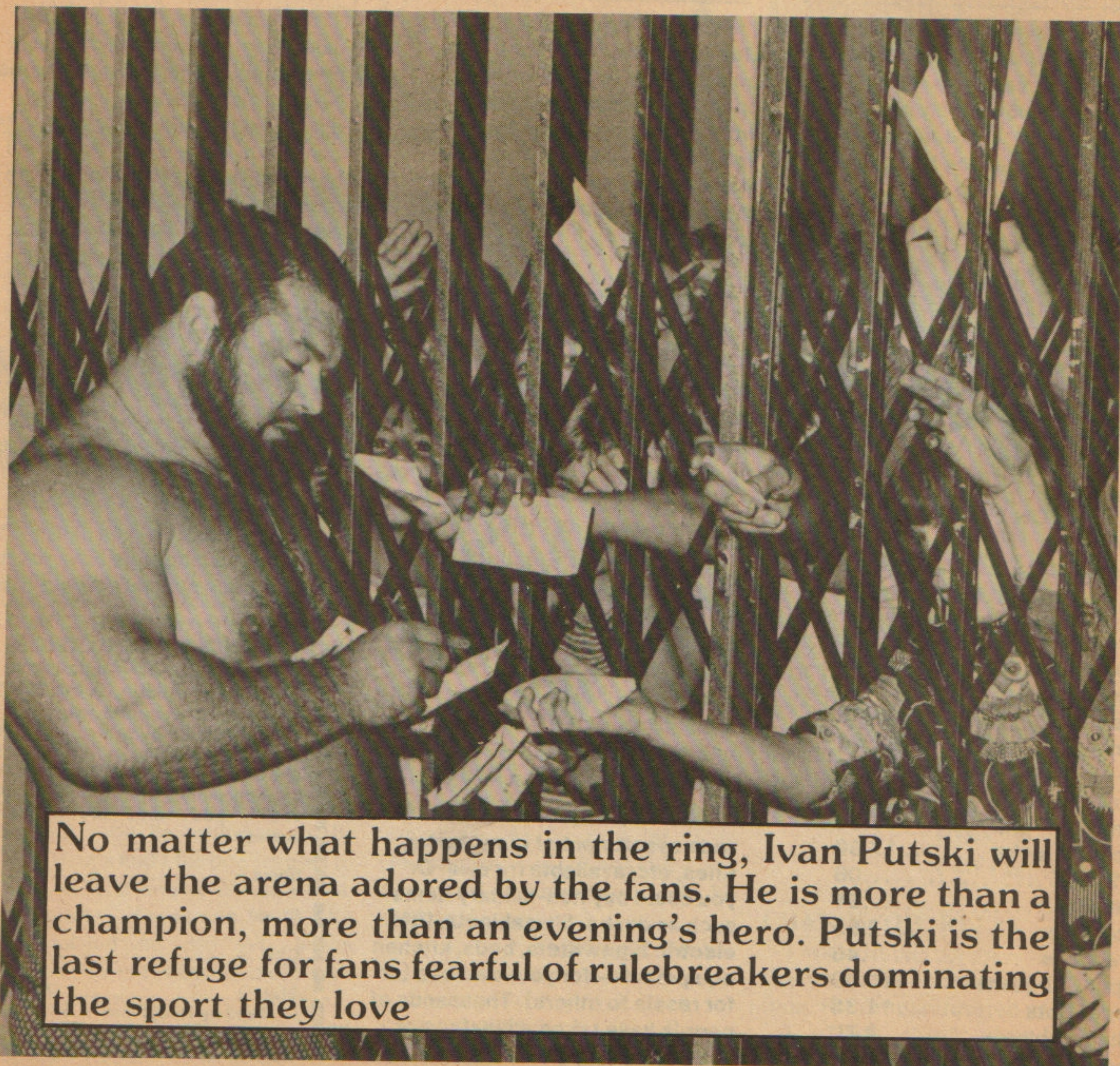
WHY THE FANS STILL LOVE IVAN PUTSKI

THE PAST FEW months have seen incredible changes in the wrestling scene. Champions have fallen, rulebreakers have flourished, and no one dares predict what will happen next. In

this whirlwind of change there remains only one constant—all the fans love Ivan Putski.

There's no denying Ivan has earned their love. The man has risked his career time and time again to defeat the grapplers hated by fans. Few arenas in the world haven't seen Ivan wage his private war against rulebreakers. Fans know no matter where the challenge, Ivan will be there.

Yet, when one examines the situation, it becomes apparent
(Continued on page 14)



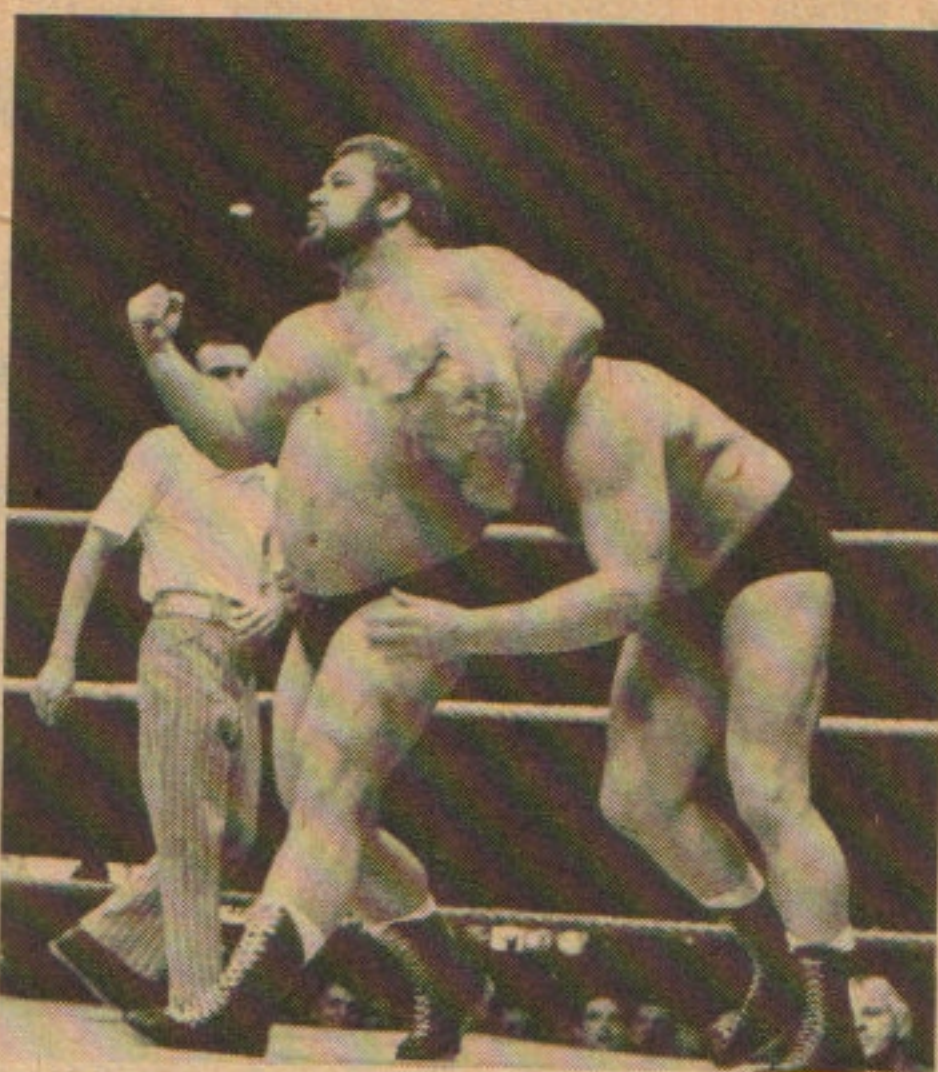
No matter what happens in the ring, Ivan Putski will leave the arena adored by the fans. He is more than a champion, more than an evening's hero. Putski is the last refuge for fans fearful of rulebreakers dominating the sport they love

IVAN PUTSKI

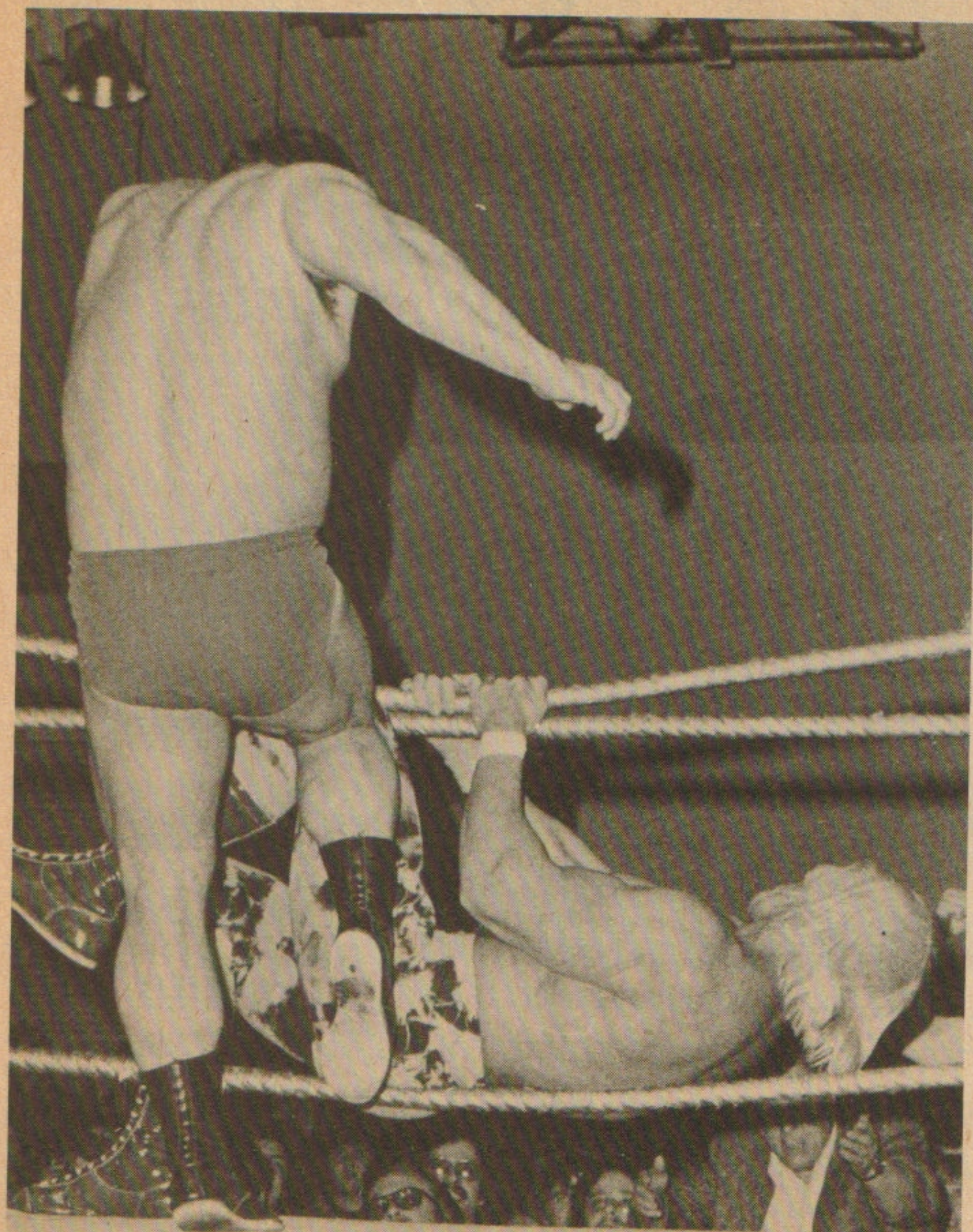
(Continued from Page 12)

Ivan's actions guarantee respect, not love. There is something else about Ivan which makes him beloved by fans wherever he appears.

"He creates an atmosphere of excitement," Bill Lowell declares, "unlike any other wrestler. I've been a fan for about 15 years and there's never been anyone like Ivan. You see him smiling before a match, inviting you to feel like you're in there with him. I don't think he'd wrestle if it wasn't for the fans. He gets his power from knowing we're with him."



Above: Ivan delights in the cheers of the fans as he struts around the ring with a headlocked Nick Bockwinkel. Below: Driven on by the crowd's cheering, Ivan knocks Superstar Billy Graham out of the ring.



Those may be the two reasons fans come from hundreds of miles away to see Ivan battle against the area's vilest grappler. A special electricity is generated whenever he enters the arena. It has to be felt rather than explained. The closest one can come to describing it is to ask the reader to imagine a pleasurable current jumping from one fan to another, forming a bond of excitement.

The second reason is the fans feel a sense of participation in Ivan's success. Something in the man invites people to identify with him. They feel a personal stake in the grappler's accomplishments. The popular heroes of all sports possess this magic that no one can learn or fake. It's born within a man. Putski has it.

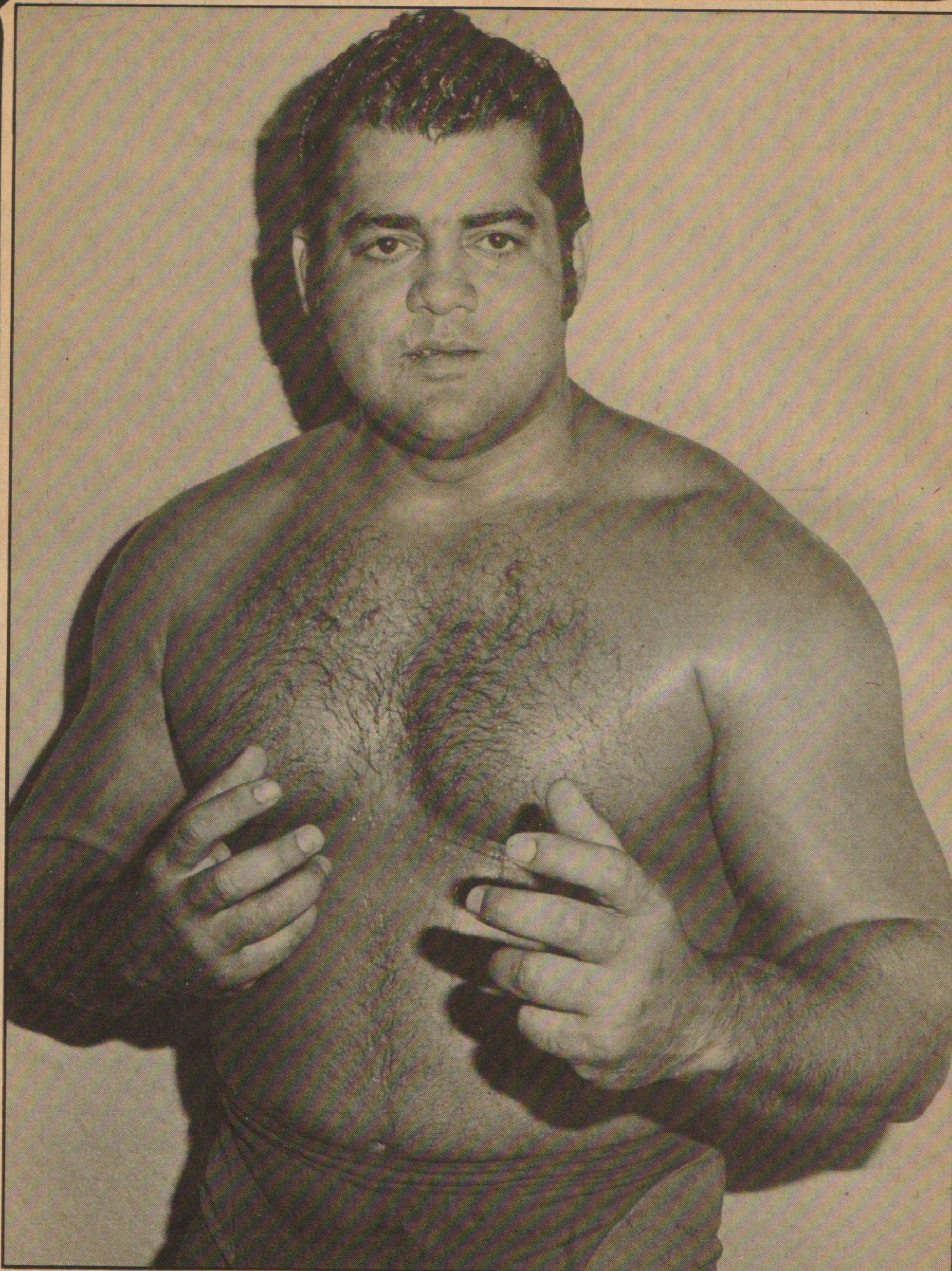
But Putski is different from many athletes in one special respect. Once a man gets to the top of a sport, he often loses any need for fan approval. He accepts worship as his due, and does nothing to court the fans' favor. Putski is remarkably different. He lives for the fans' applause, openly seeking their favor. The fans believe he needs them as much as they need him.

The shocking thing is that they are probably right. Something about Ivan makes him need the applause to feel assured he's done well. Most athletes have a sense of when everything is going right. No one needs to tell them. Ivan may not possess this ability. He can't feel when his movements are perfect, when his strength and agility are functioning at their peak. He needs the fans to tell him. They speak to him with cheers.

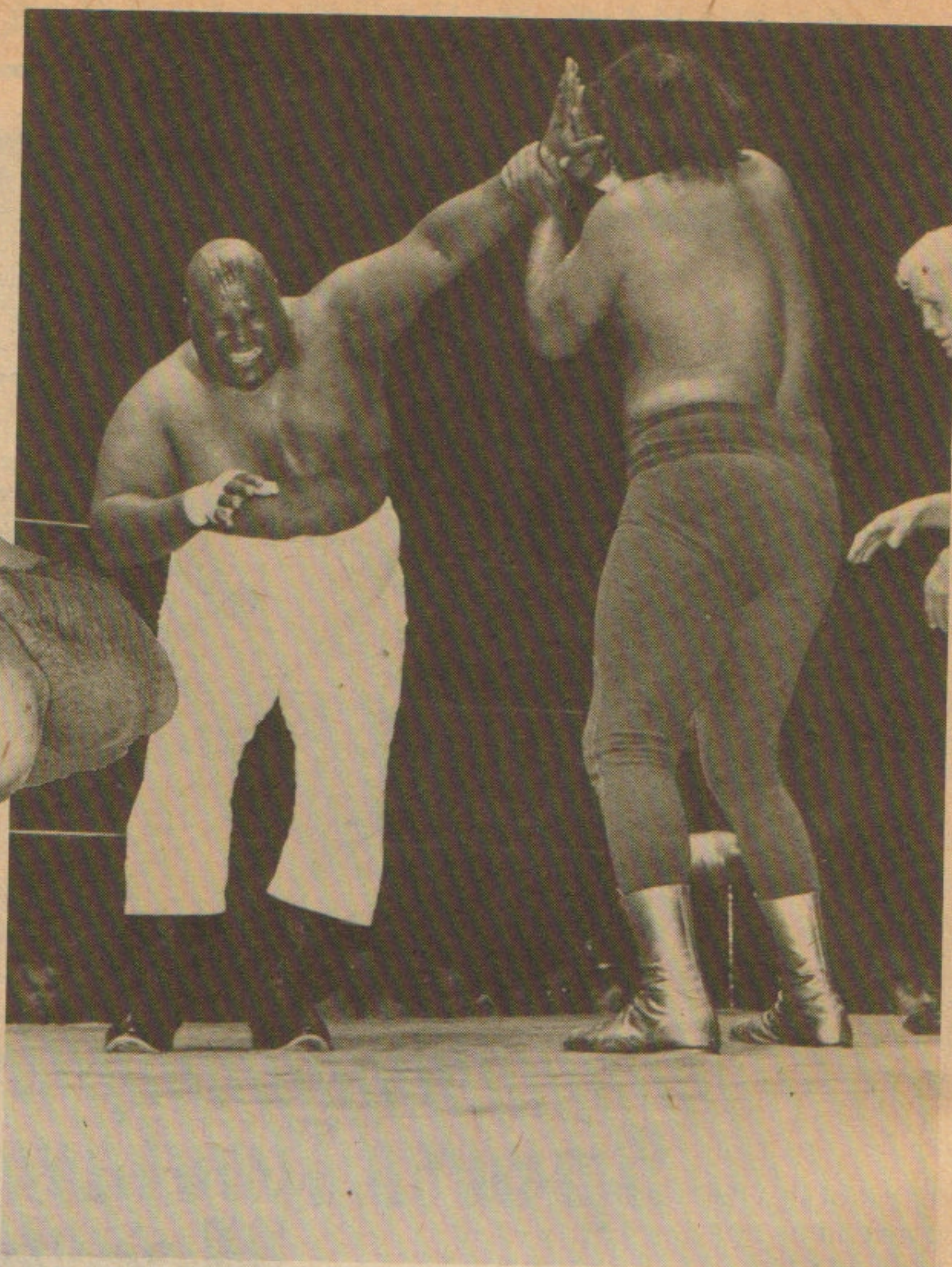
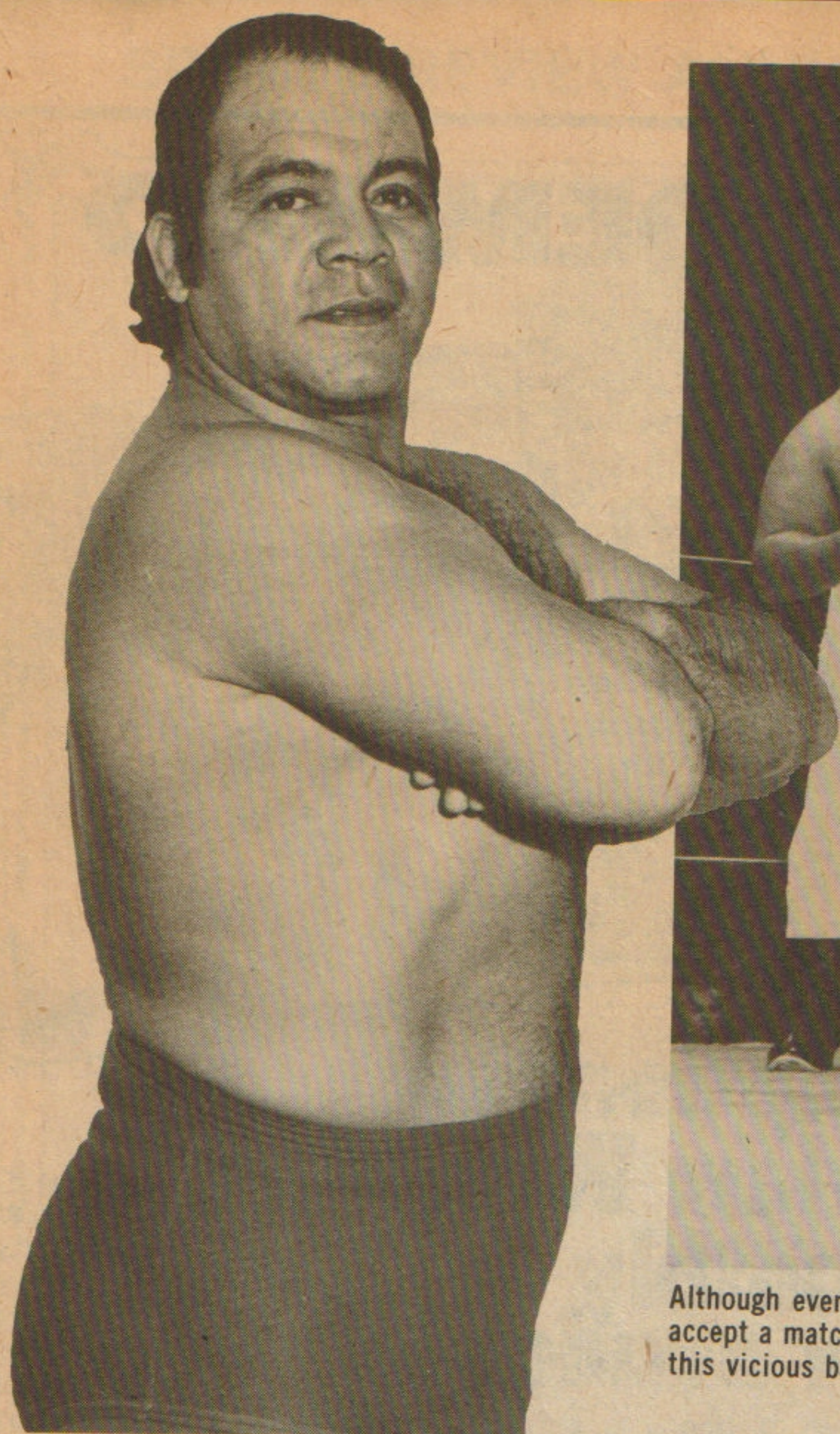
There hasn't been much for fans to cheer about lately. The rulebreakers are dominating the sport like never before, owning the major titles, regional titles, and most of the tag team titles. The scientific wrestlers are beginning to feel their best is not enough.

Putski knows his best is enough for the fans. Their cheers tell him so. So he does his best for them, showing the rulebreakers they don't own the entire sport. And for that, the fans love him. There can be no better reason. □

SPORTS REVIEW ANNUAL BONUS PINUP #2



PEDRO MORALES



Although everyone warned him not to, Jose Lothario (left) decided to accept a match against the notorious Abdullah the Butcher. Throughout this vicious battle (above) Jose was able to remain in control.

JOSE LOTHARIO: “I’LL CRY TOMORROW”

PHOTOS BY JIM CALDWELL

THE WARM WIND caressed Jose Lothario as he strolled through the woods. Jose's senses were alive to everything.

Each nerve tried to capture forever the experience. This might be the last walk.

A stream flowed gently

through a grassy knoll. Lothario took off his shoes, then slowly walked through the grass, feeling its soft warmth. He then

There are times when a man must live for the moment and damn the consequences. Jose Lothario faced such a confrontation. He didn't care about tomorrow or forever. All that mattered was that one match on a very special night!

stepped into the stream, cold as it cascaded around his calves and feet. Remember how good this feels, Lothario told himself. This memory may have to last the rest of my life. Remember.

Jose took his time returning home. Hours away was the ultimate battle. He would recklessly risk his life against Abdullah the Butcher. There was no turning back. The decision had been made.

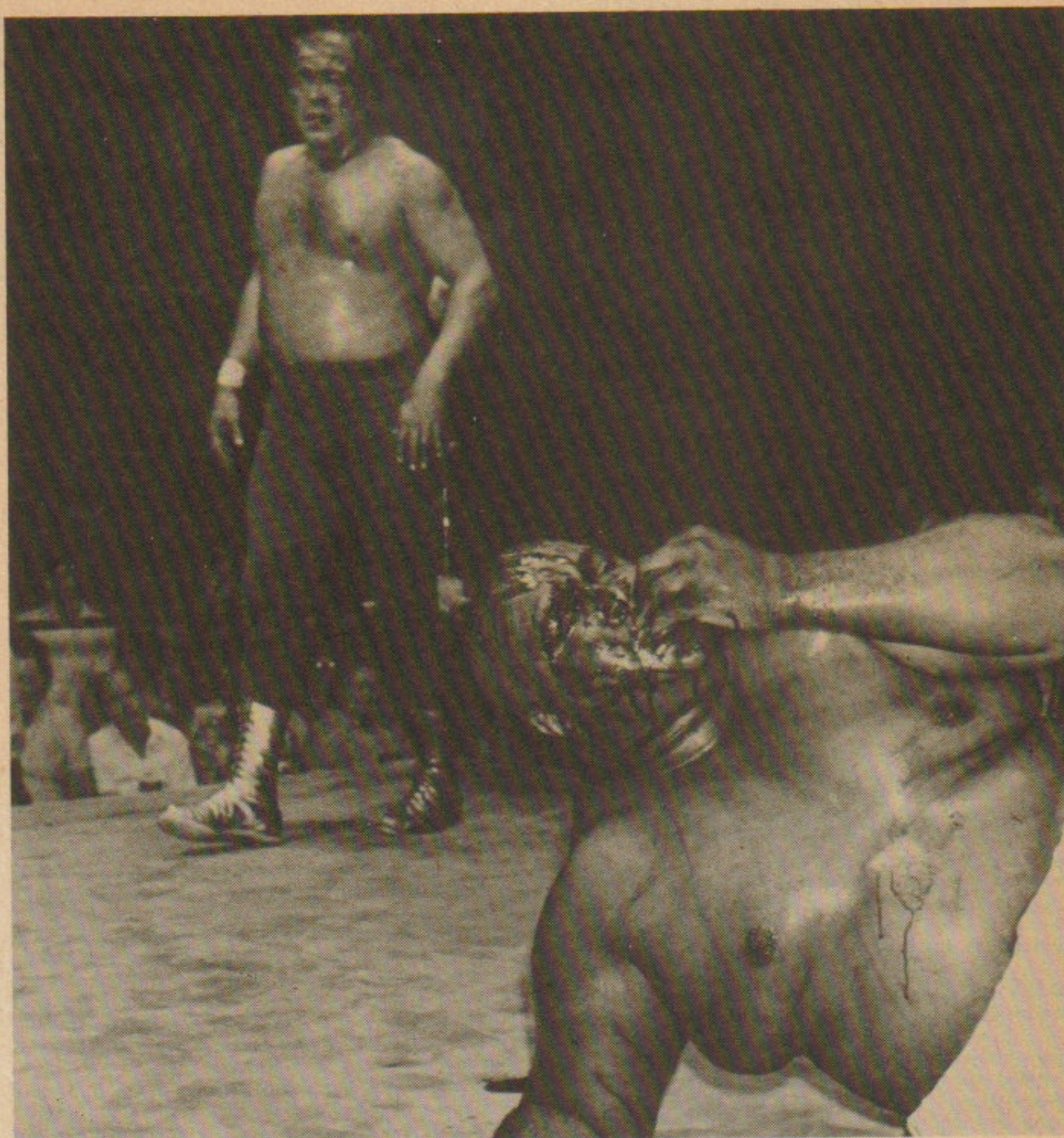
Lothario knew most wrestlers are overly cautious against Abdullah, the only intelligent thing to be. The gargantuan grappler could mangle any man who made a mistake against him. It's better to lose a match than lose your life. Abdullah delights in maiming a victim. Give him the slightest chance and hope your hospital insurance is paid up. God help the man who tries to conquer Abdullah.

No one has to tell Lothario the risks involved. Jose realized a brawl to the finish against Abdullah could easily be the last match of his life. Still, a stalemate is like kissing your grandmother; all the movement but no thrill. To beat Abdullah—that's an ambition worthy of any man. But to defeat him, great risks must be taken.

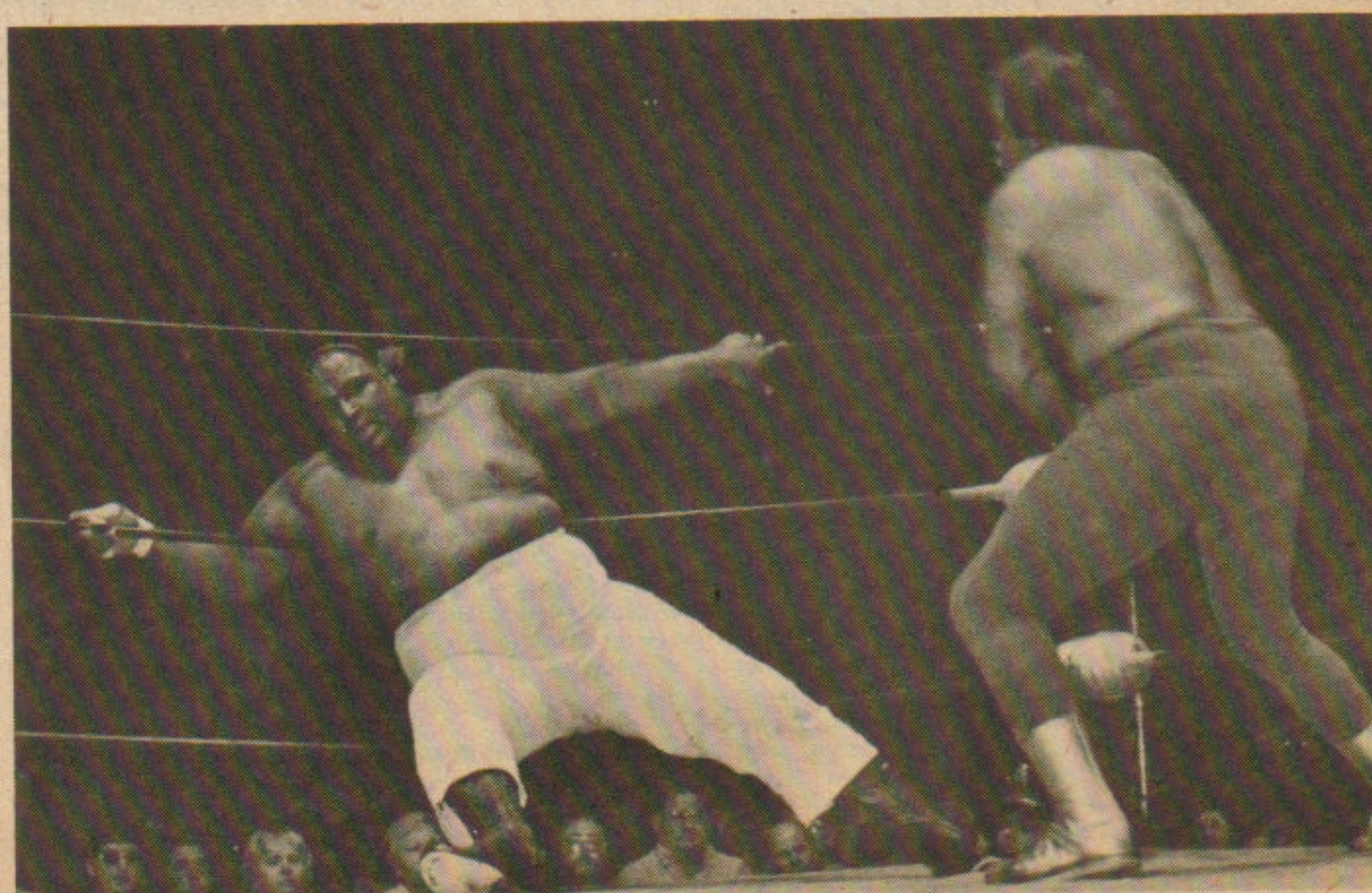
Jose knew what had to be done. There was no time for hesitancy or indecision. The night would be a brawl to the finish. "If I should fail, I'll cry tomorrow," Jose told friends. "I'll live for the night and damn the rest!"

Friends begged him to reconsider. There was no

(Continued on page 64)



Late in the battle, both Jose and Abdullah are bloody, though it seems Abdullah is definitely worse for the wear (above). Jose surprises Abdullah when he throws the hated wrestler against the ropes (below).



MR. WRESTLING: TRIBUTE TO AN UNDERRATED STAR

No one denies his greatness. Yet year after year, other wrestlers seem to get the praise and recognition he clearly deserves. The time has come to justly honor one of the greatest athletes in the sport's history—Mr. Wrestling!

ONE OF THE worst things that can happen to a human being is to be taken for granted. You tend to forget a person's truth worth when you unthinkingly expect him to maintain a certain level of excellence.

That injustice has been visited upon a true gem of a wrestler. And a gem of a man. He is Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods. And he is one of wrestling's most underrated superstars.

"Oh, attention embarrasses me," Woods said sheepishly. "I feel awkward. I'm the type of guy who has a job to do and goes out and does it to the best of his abilities. I want no thanks."

But you're going to get it. And it's long overdue. No one has the sort of moral background that Woods has. There are no

blemishes. There are no skeletons rattling around in the closet.

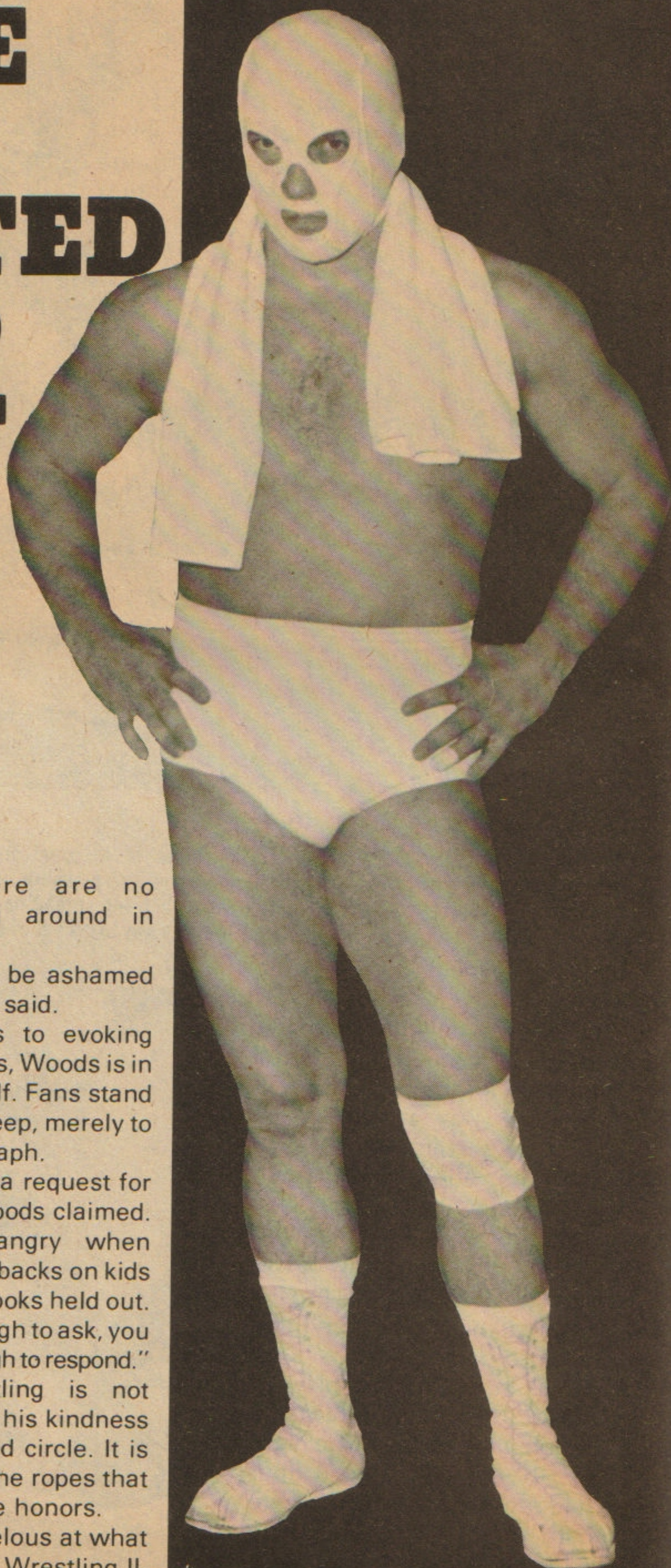
"I've nothing to be ashamed of," Mr. Wrestling said.

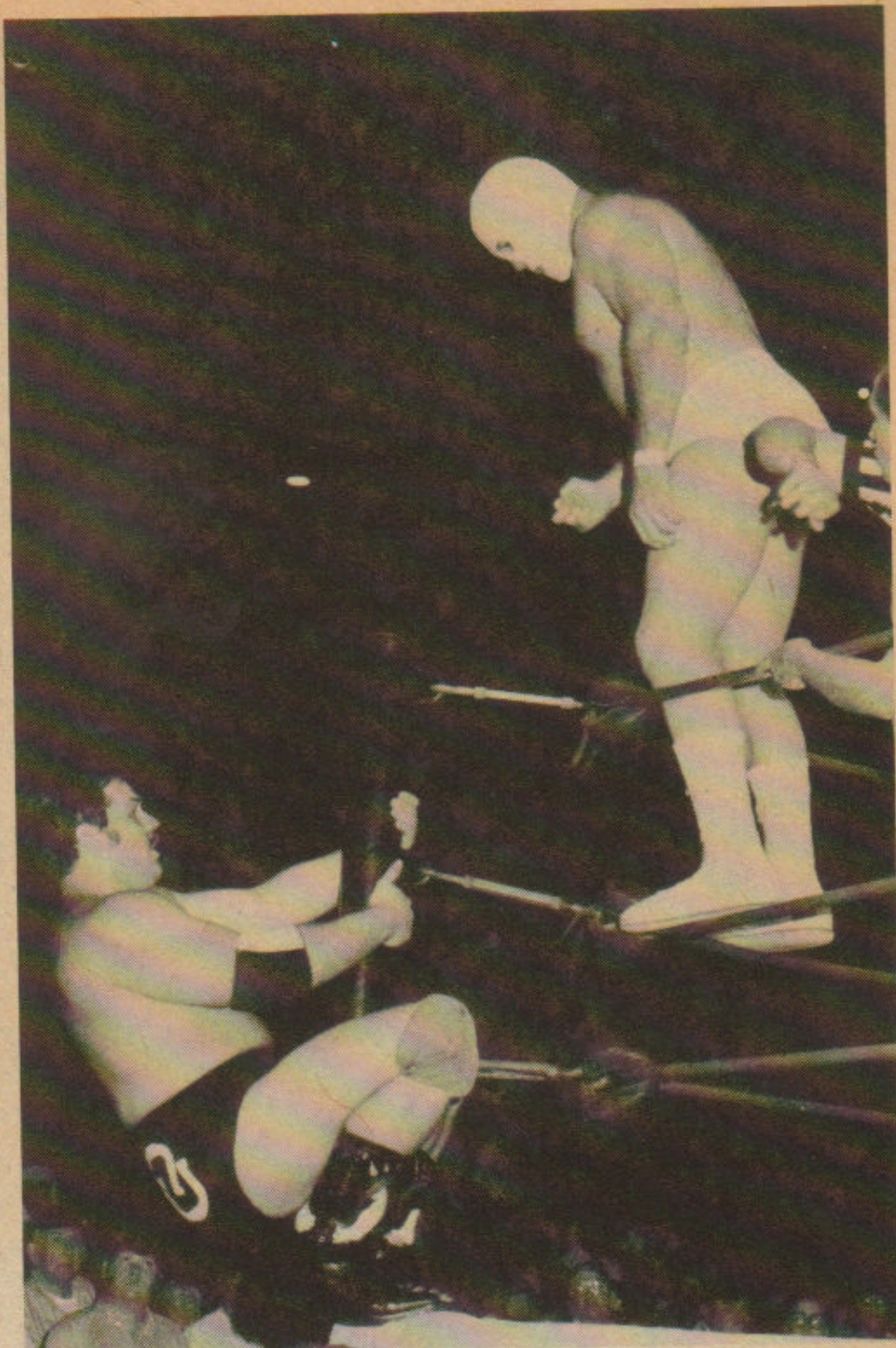
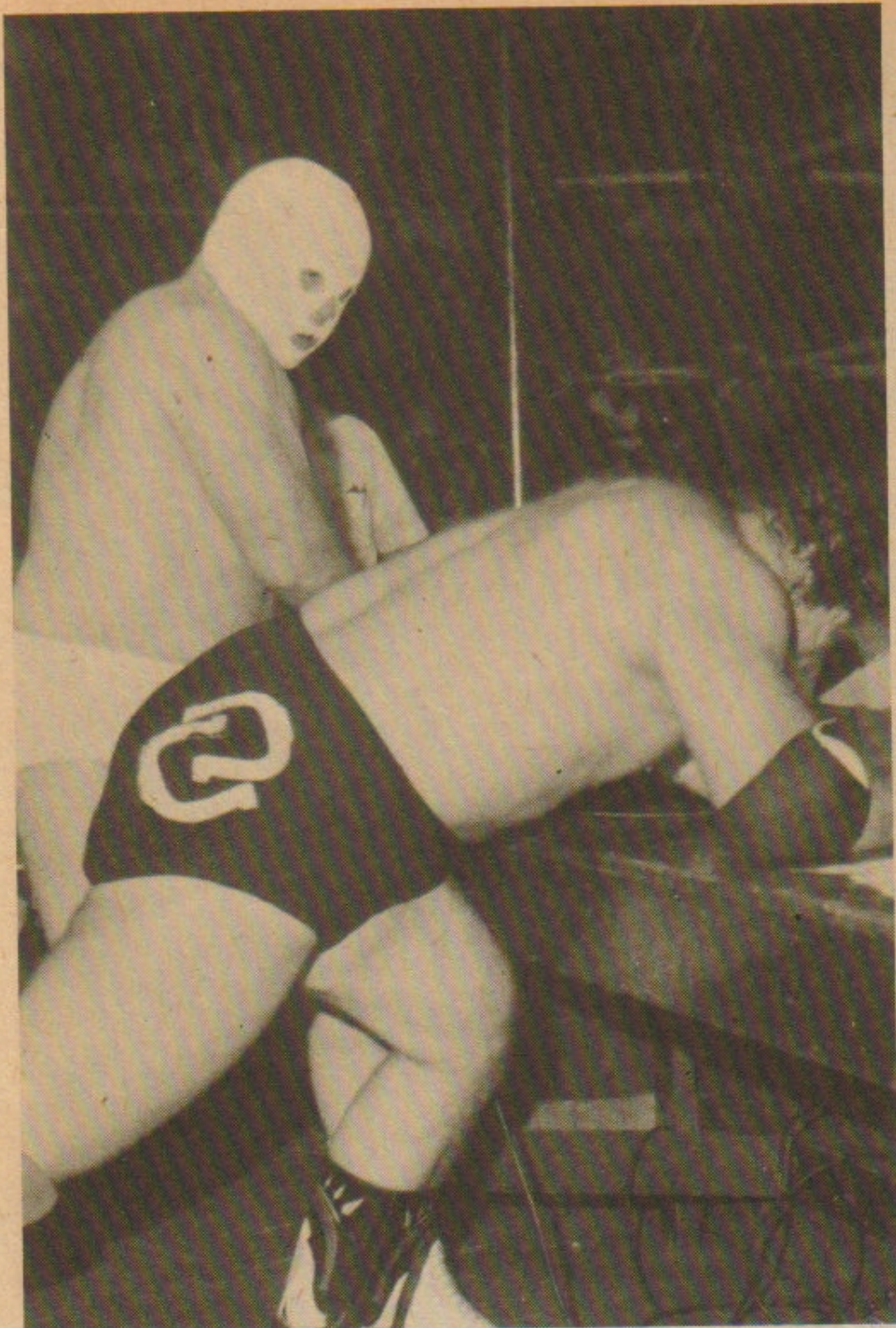
When it comes to evoking adoration from fans, Woods is in a league by himself. Fans stand for blocks, three-deep, merely to get Woods' autograph.

"I'll never refuse a request for an autograph," Woods claimed. "It makes me angry when athletes turn their backs on kids with autographs books held out. If they're nice enough to ask, you should be nice enough to respond."

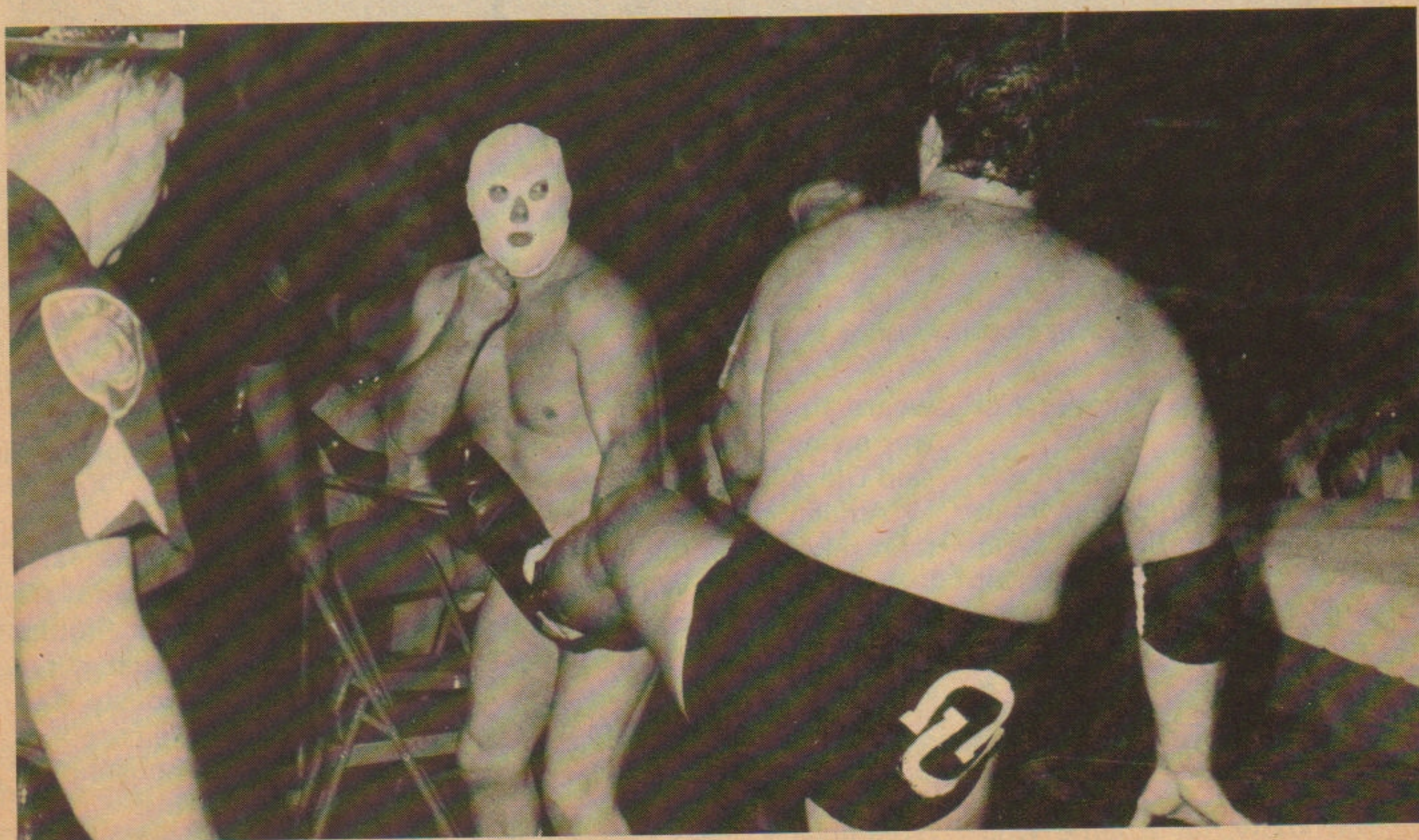
But Mr. Wrestling is not beloved merely for his kindness outside the squared circle. It is his genius within the ropes that has earned him the honors.

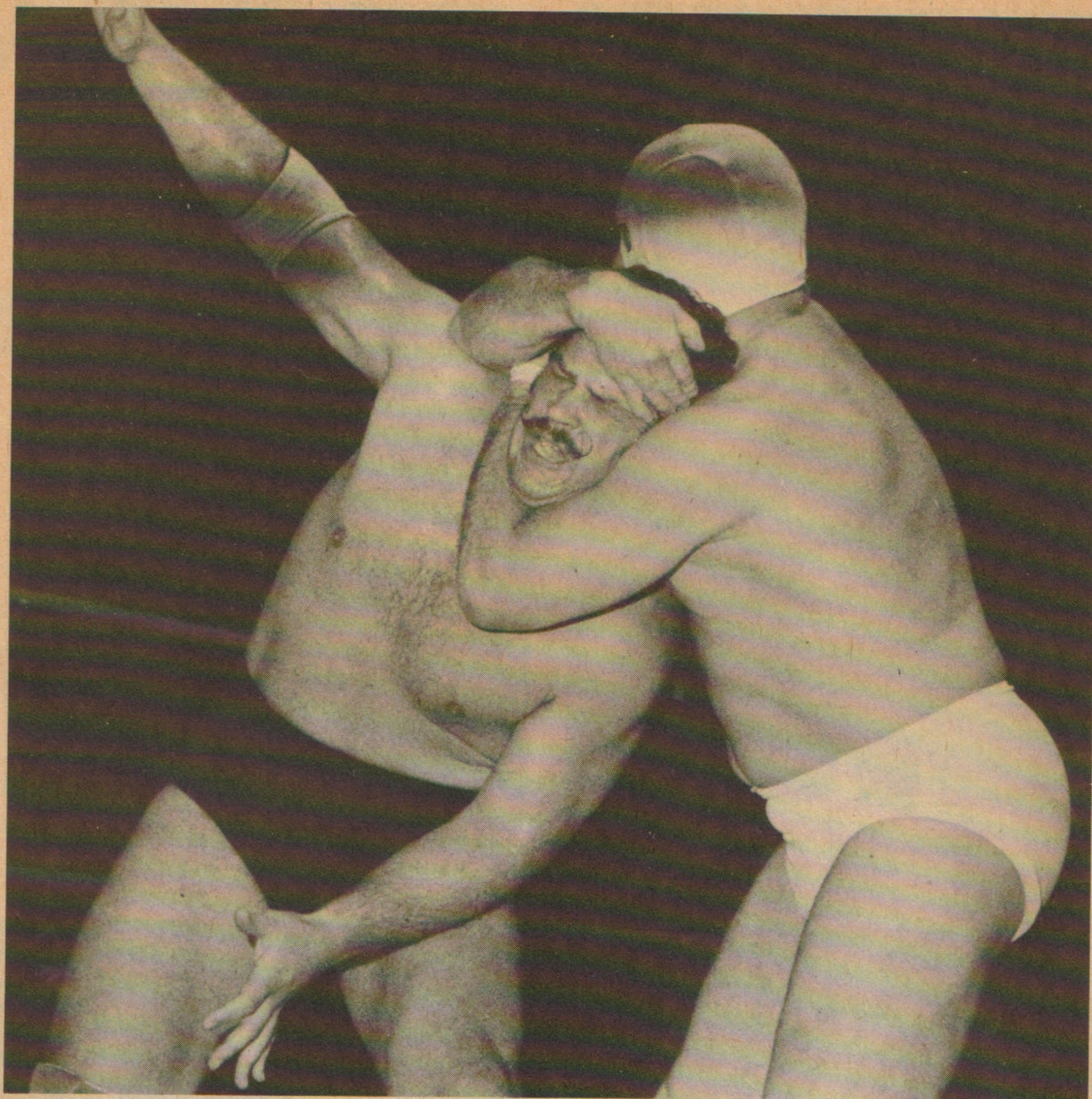
"Woods is marvelous at what he does," said Mr. Wrestling II.





Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods and Ron Bass take their battle out of the ring. Mr. Wrestling gets the better of the action (above left and below) and then challenges Bass to return (above right).





Mr. Wrestling is one of the few wrestlers to have mastered the sleeper hold. Scientific wrestlers such as Mr. Wrestling II and Tommy Rich idolize the great star, and even rulebreakers like Ole Anderson and Ivan Koloff admit a degree of respect.

"No one manages moves like Tim. No one."

"Growing up, I idolized one man above anyone. That man was Mr. Wrestling," said Tommy Rich. "He symbolizes all that is good in wrestling. I've spent my career trying to do the things he does. I hope I'm a fraction as successful."

Even foes offer grudging respect.

"You know, for a lame who

wears a mask and moves like a wet sponge, he ain't half bad," said Ole Anderson.

"Among the boobs who call themselves scientific wrestlers, I would say Mr. Wrestling has the most ability," conceded Ivan Koloff. "However, that isn't saying very much.

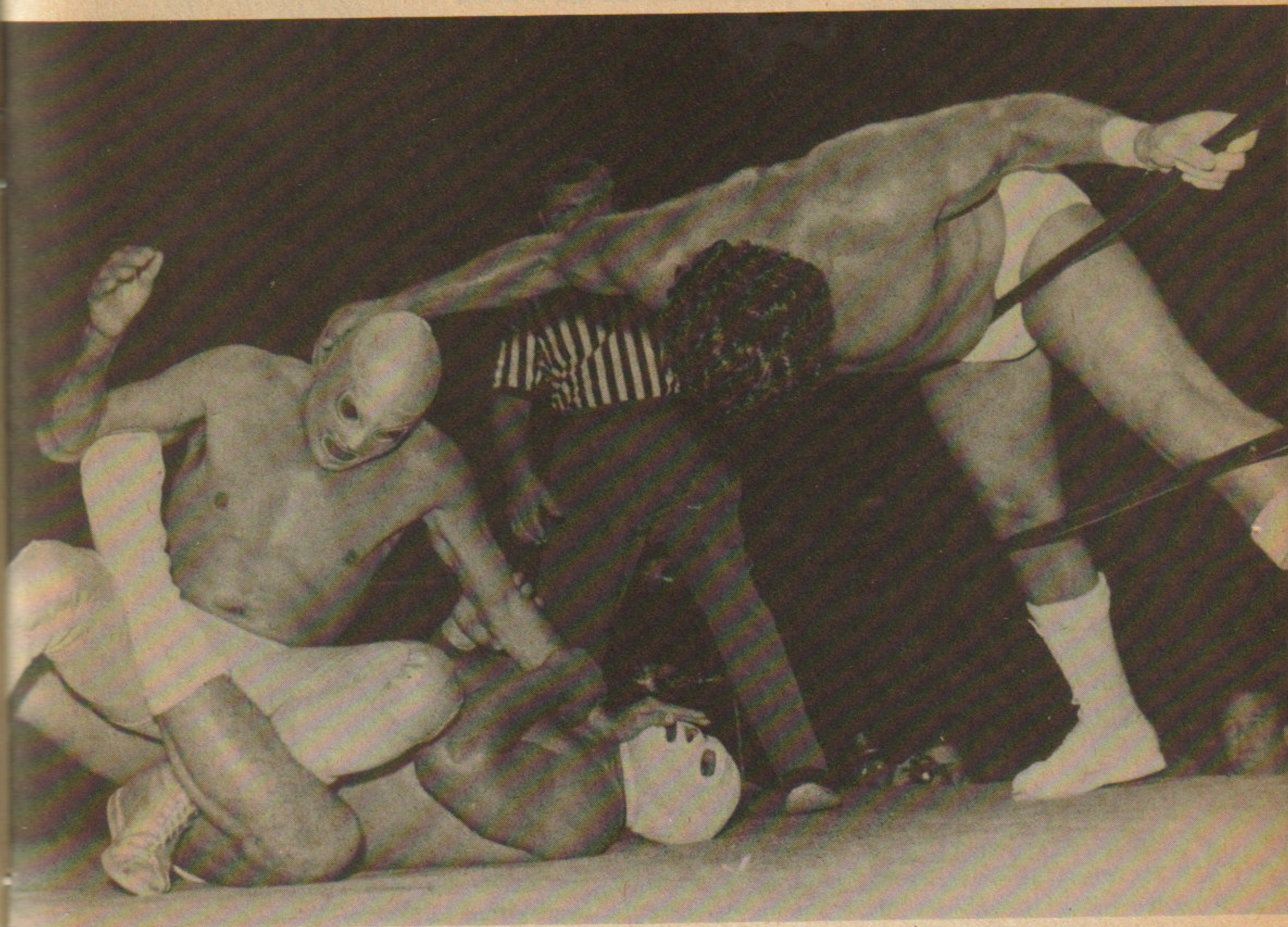
"Woods is uneasy with all the attention.

"When a guy like Mr. Wrestling II says something

nice, it means a lot to me. He's a friend and I respect his opinion," Mr. Wrestling said. "And a youngster like Tommy Rich saying nice comments also pleases me. Wrestlers have a large responsibility to future generations. They must set a good example. Obviously, I've done that in Tommy's case."

And in many households, where the name "Mr. Wrestling" is said with honor. □

• DREAM TEAMS • THE TAG TEAMS THAT MUST BE MADE



THERE IS NO sport like wrestling to stir the imagination. Fans constantly argue about who is the best, strongest, or fastest. Everybody has his choice for the one match he would most like to see.

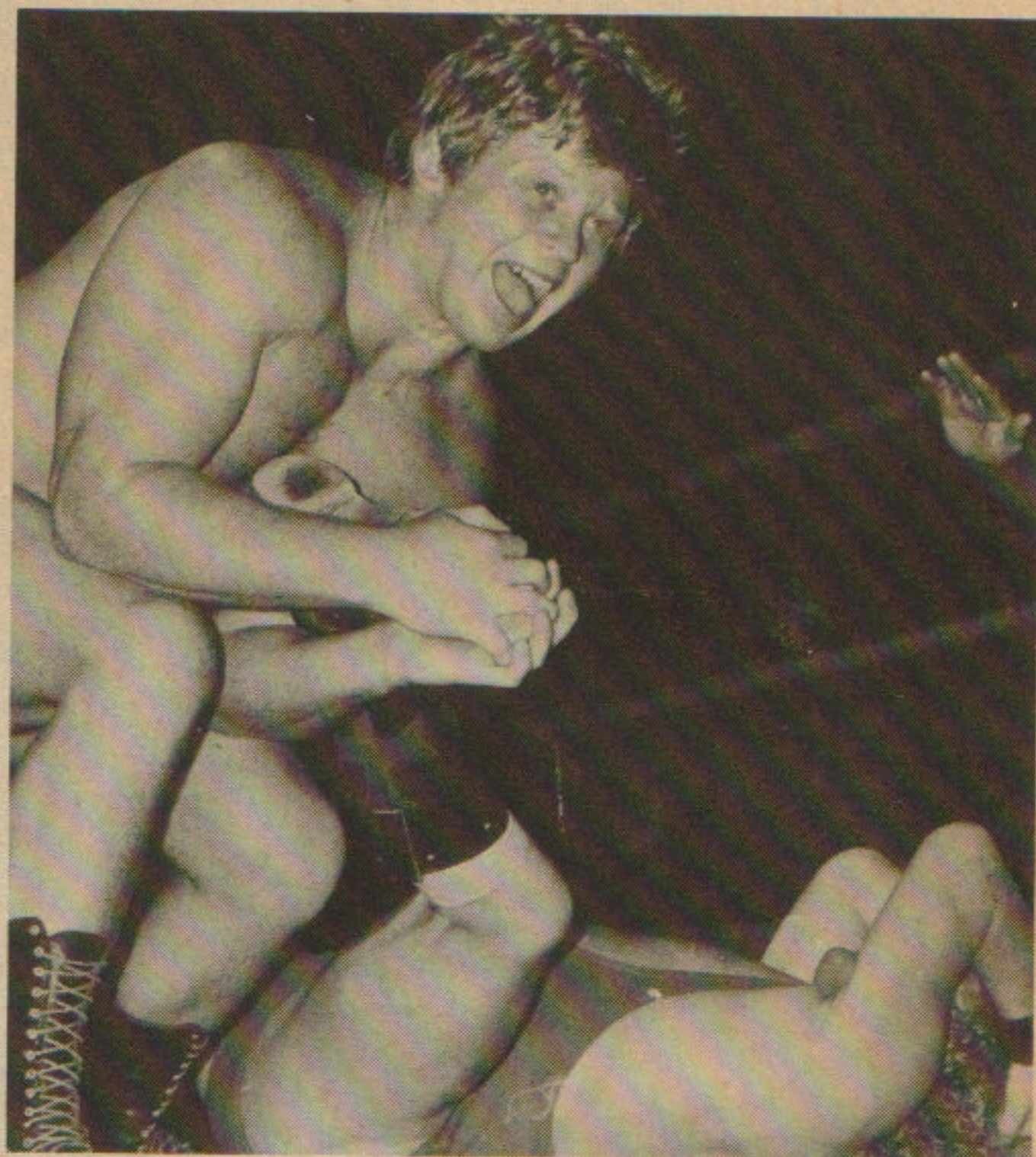
In this special section, each editor of *Sports Review Wrestling Annual* has chosen the one tag team combination he would most like to

see. The range is as varied as the athletes who grace this sport, from aerial daredevils to powerful musclemen to cunning rulebreakers. These are our dream tag team combinations, the pairings we think would bring greatness to this exciting aspect of the world's most thrilling sport.



BRUNO SAMMARTINO & BOB BACKLUND

By Peter King



Recently retired Bruno Sammartino, one of the all-time greats, grasps Stan Hansen's chin (above left). Current WWF champ Bob Backlund (above right), would add speed and maneuverability to the duo.

ONE IS THE Living Legend. The other is a growing legend. Together they would be the greatest tag team in history.

Imagine it. Bruno Sammartino, two-time WWF champion, teaming with Bob Backlund, the current WWF titleholder. Their combined talent and popularity would send any arena in the world spinning from the cheers.

I realize there might be a problem in styles. Bruno is a power wrestler who uses leverage and strength to defeat his opponents. Backlund, while also very strong,

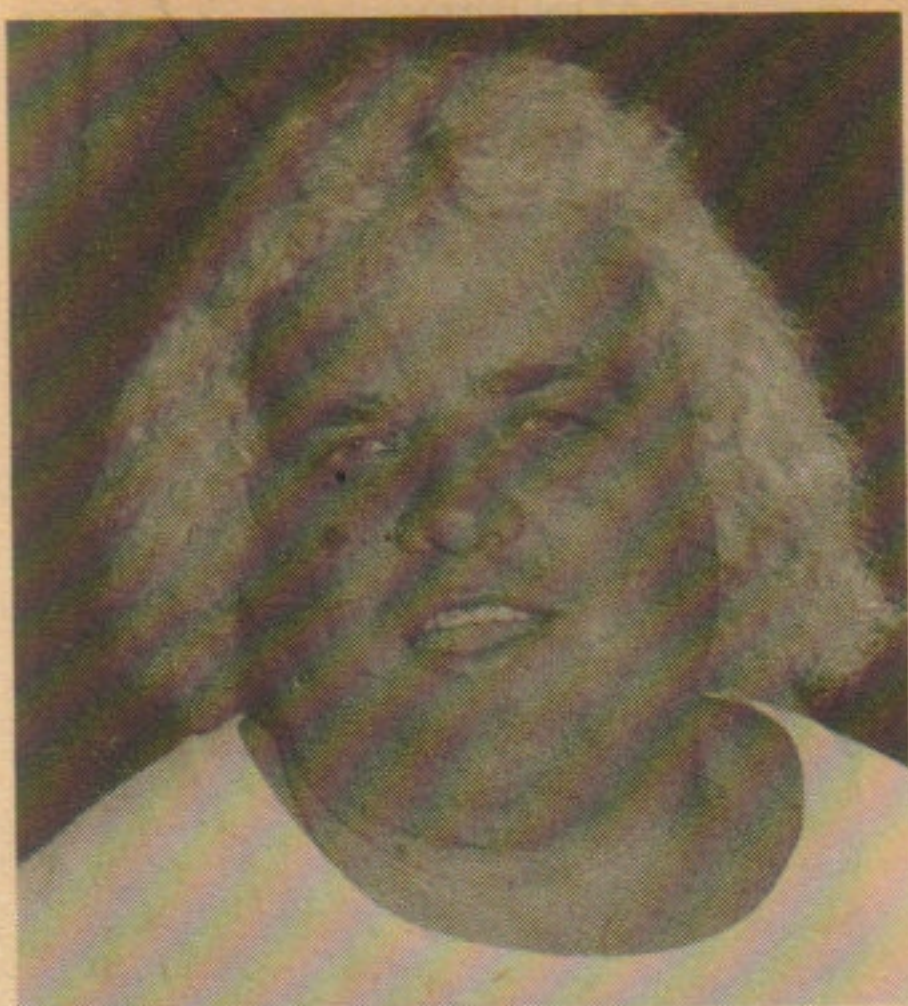
likes to use his great speed and knowledge of scientific wrestling to win his matches. It is possible that these two greats could find their opposing styles a hindrance. After all, most great tag teams are formed by men whose styles are similar.

"Believe me, there wouldn't be any problem," said Arnold Skoaland, the man who guided both men to the WWF title. "These are both excellent athletes who can adapt. I wouldn't worry about any differences in their wrestling styles. Remember, you're talking about

two of the greatest athletes in history. I'm certain they would be unstoppable as a team."

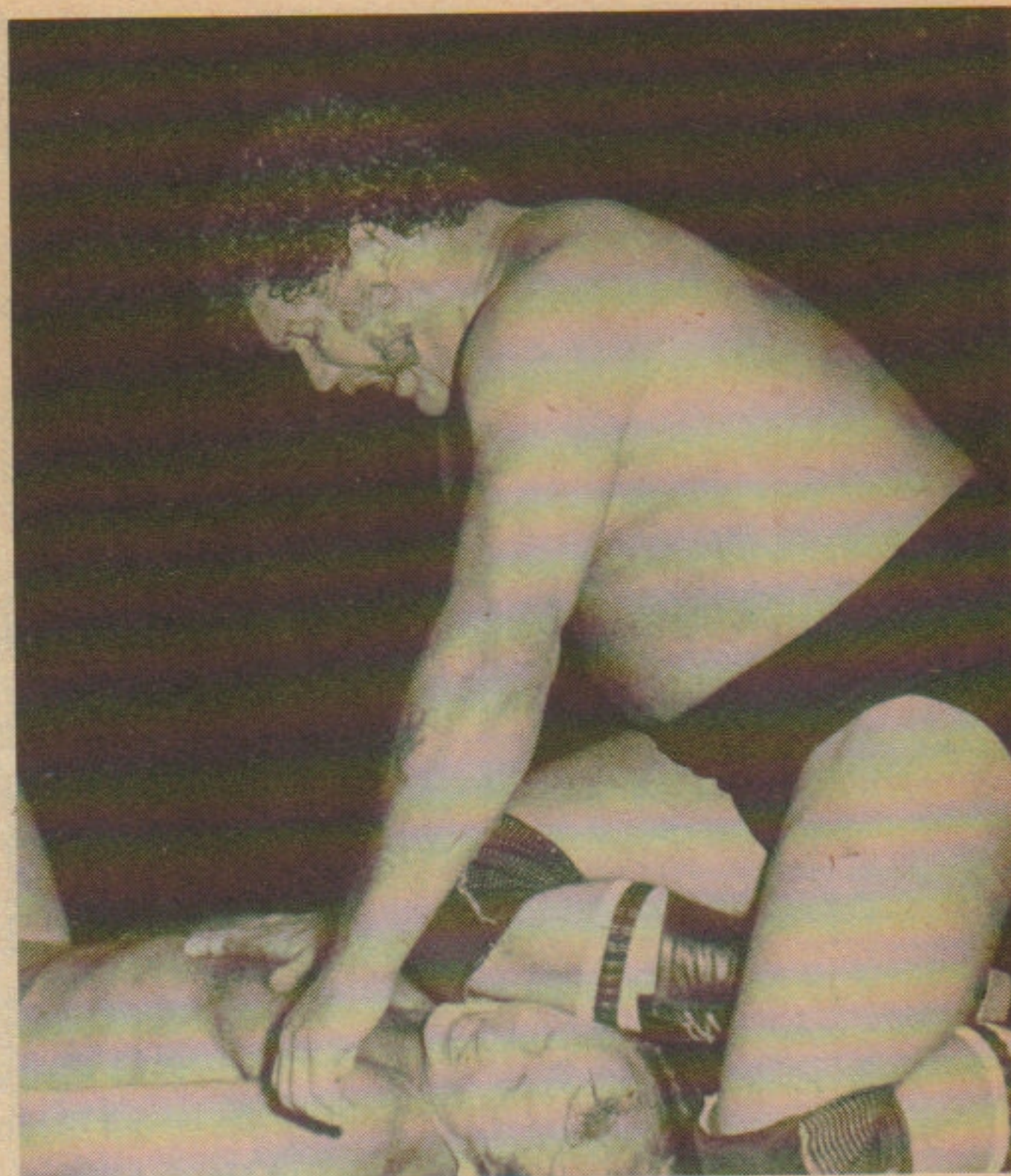
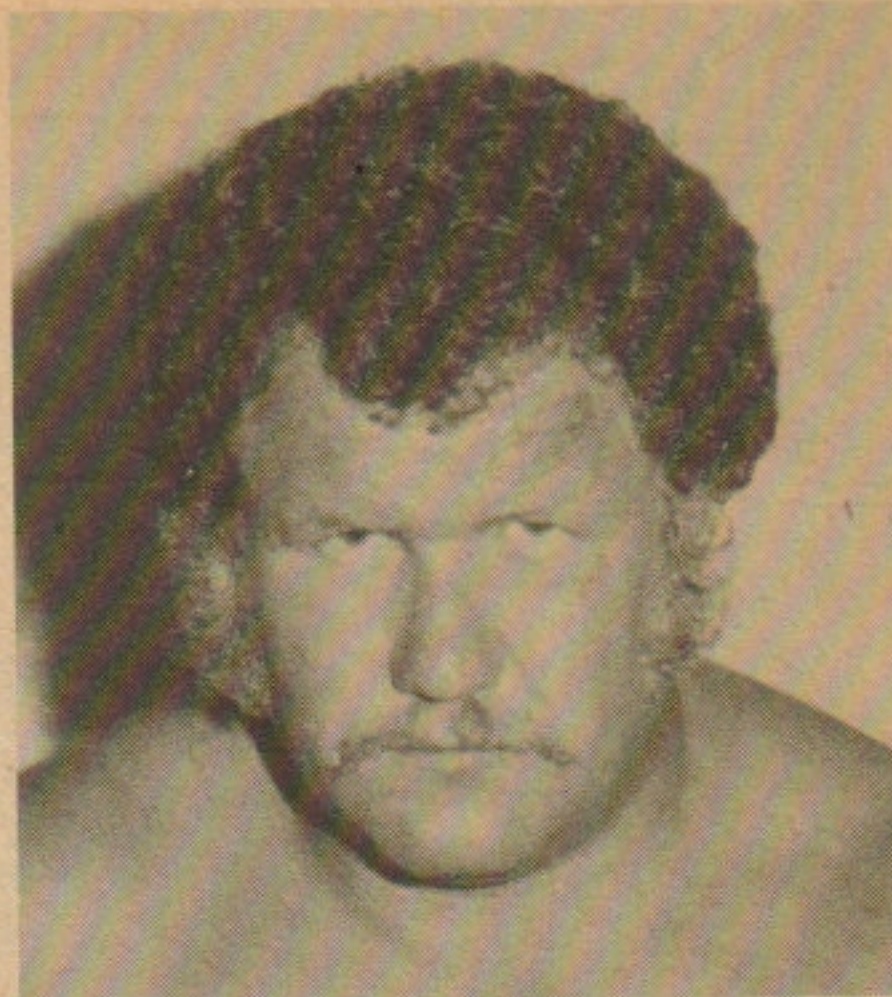
I can almost visualize the two men working as a team. Bruno starts first and wears down the opposition with solid, power-sapping maneuvers like armlocks and headlocks. Backlund takes over with a dazzling display of hiprolls and dropkicks. The matches would always end the same way. Bruno and Backlund would be in center ring with their hands held high in victory.

If only it could be. □



DUSTY RHODES & HARLEY RACE

By Bill Apter



Dusty Rhodes gets a rare opportunity to display his vast scientific knowledge against Ted DiBiase (above left). Harley Race, always a brawler, digs his knee into Dory Funk's neck (above right).

SOME OF YOU may be laughing at the thought of a team of Dusty Rhodes and Harley Race, but let me assure you that this actually was a dream of mine. It occurred the night I photographed one of their classic brawls in Tampa, Florida.

After pounding each other around the ring for the full 60-minute time limit, the two greats, their faces dripping with blood, glared into each other's eyes for a full 30 seconds. And then, finally realizing the respect they had for

one another, they embraced in the middle of the ring. They announced then and there that they would become a tag team.

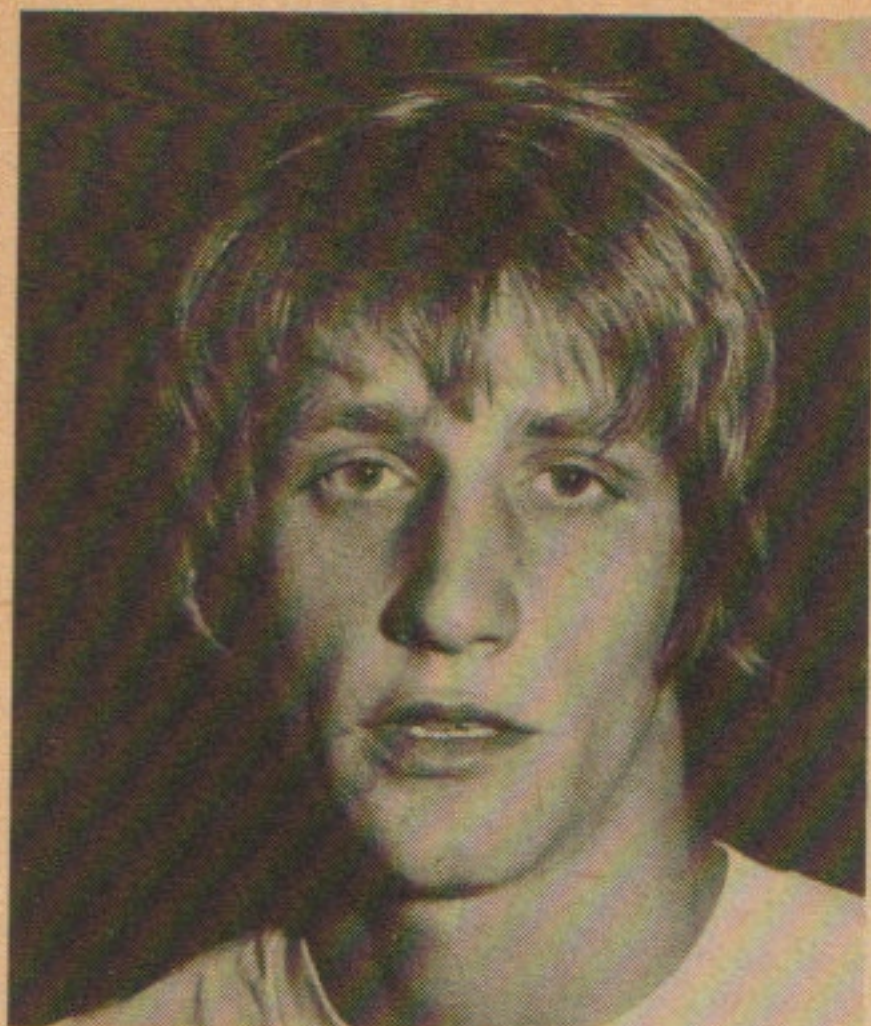
I'm sorry to say that I woke up at that point, so I don't know how far they went as a team. One can only speculate. I feel that Rhodes and Race would pound their way to the championship and into the hearts of wrestling fans around the world.

It wouldn't be a fancy team, but it sure would be effective. In actuality, they are two very similar men. They both charge ahead

relentlessly without any regard for the punishment their bodies have to absorb along the way. All they care about is the ultimate destruction of their opponent, a goal they almost always achieve.

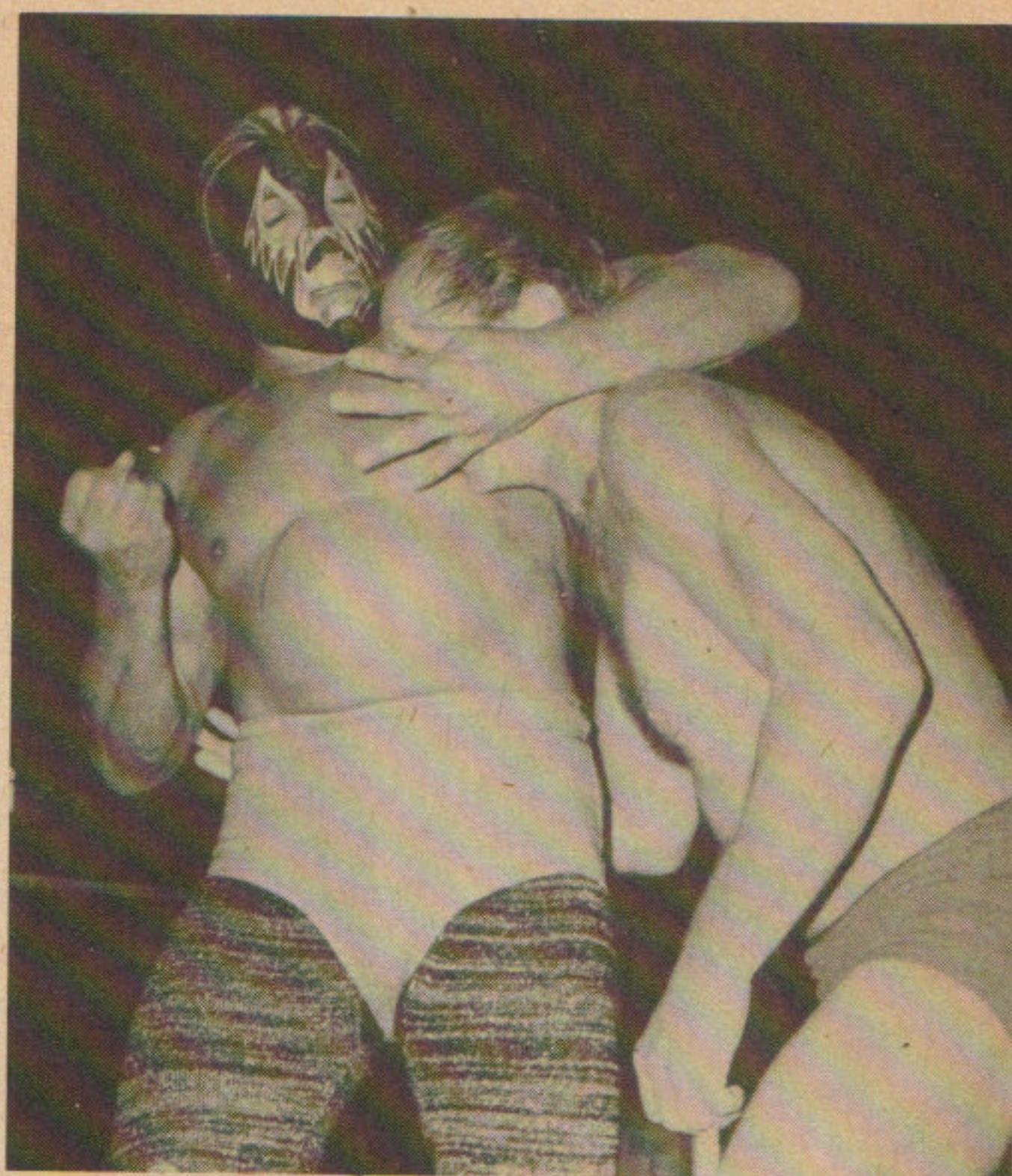
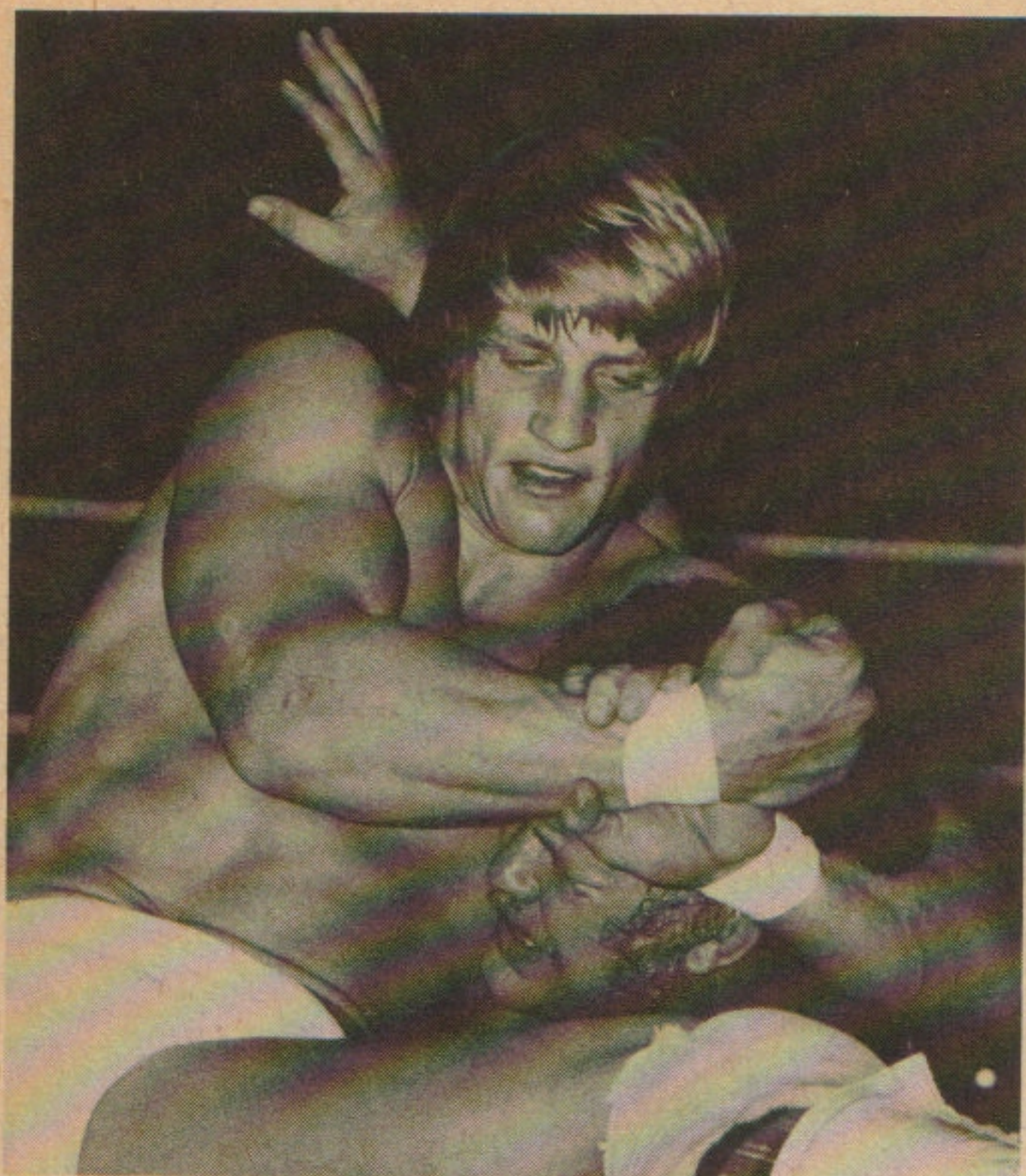
For too long these men have been blinded by their mutual hatred, such a waste of time and energy. Race and Rhodes should forget their differences and apply that time and energy to the formation of a great tag team.

It would be a dream come true. □



KEVIN VON ERICH & MIL MASCARAS

By Stu Saks



The youthful Kevin Von Erich applies a headlock on Harley Race (above left). The experienced Mil Mascaras is forced out of his normal game plan by Dory Funk Jr. (above right).

ICAN EASILY picture the action.

Kevin Von Erich lifts his dazed opponent off the canvas to his feet. Grabbing him by the arm, he whips his foe toward the ropes into the precise location that would send him rebounding across the ring into Kevin's corner.

There, one of the most recognizable men in the history of wrestling (despite the fact that his face has never been seen) is standing atop the turnbuckles with the steadiness of Nadia Comaneci

on her balance beam.

As the stunned opponent's momentum carries him at full speed toward the enemy corner, Mascaras dives from his launching pad and crushes the man to the canvas in one majestic swoop.

Kevin Von Erich and Mil Mascaras would make the perfect tag team because their styles are so similar. Kevin has patterned himself after the masked Mexican legend and the result is obvious. Just like Mascaras, he has trained not only for speed or strength, but

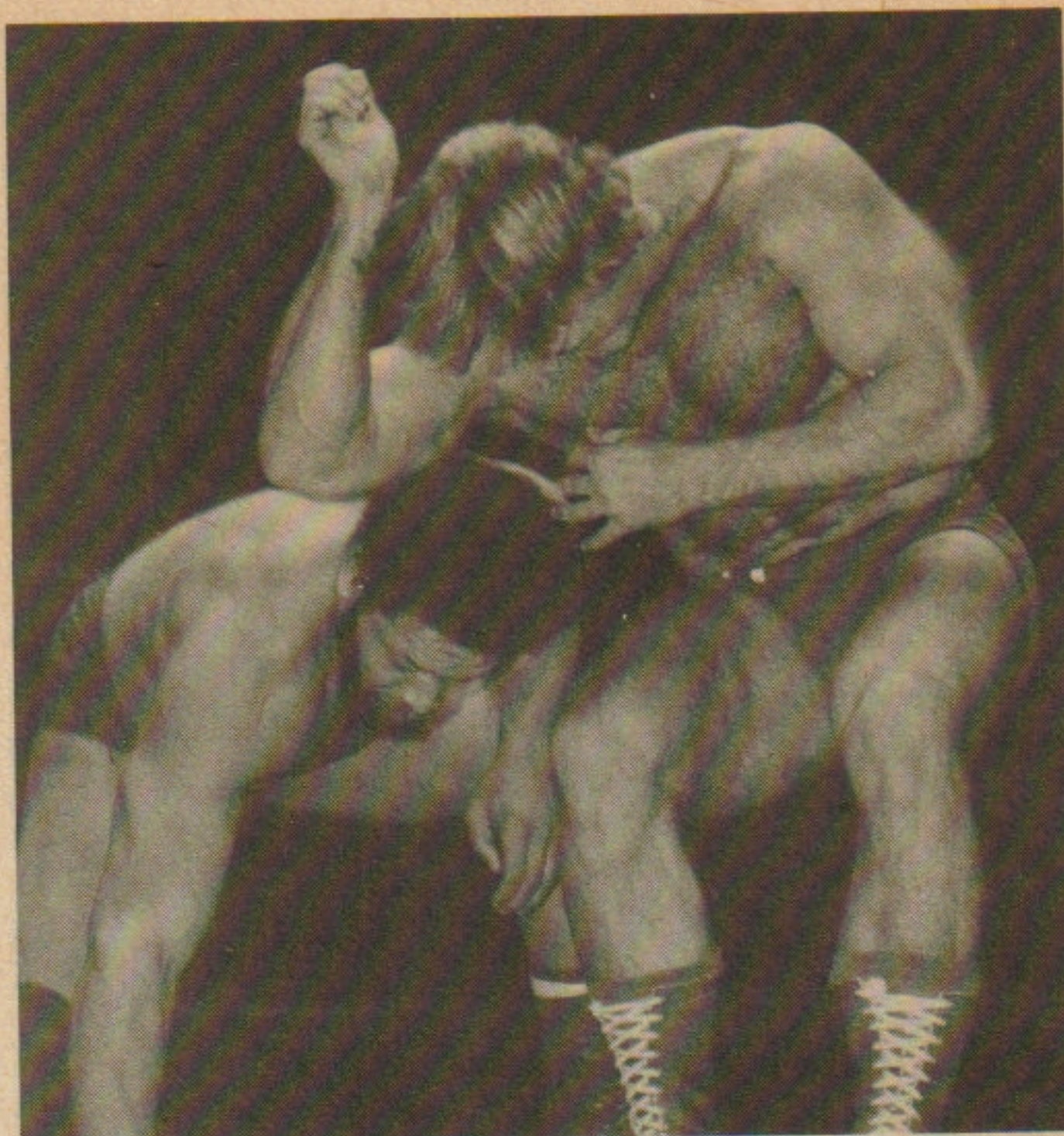
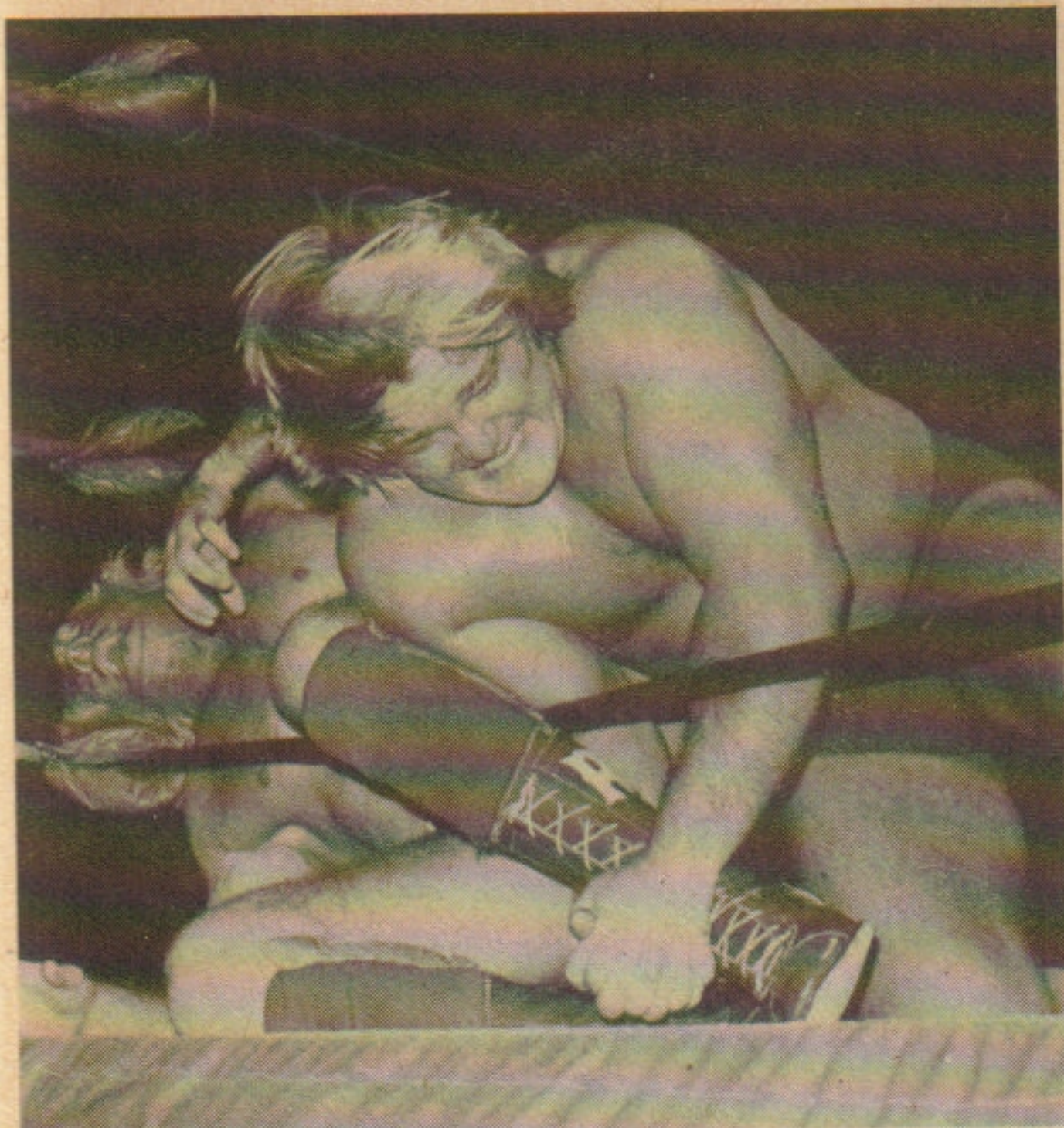
for the graceful combination of the two.

Together, I feel they can be an unstoppable duo. Their physical skills would mesh into one well-oiled machine of unmatched brilliance. They would dazzle their opponents with speed and stagger their opponents with strength. They would act as one and react as one. Soon, there would be no more *they*. They would become it. And it would be the best tag team ever. □



GREG VALENTINE & PAUL ORNDORFF

By Dan Shocket



Greg Valentine is determined to break the leg of his former tag team partner Ric Flair (above left). Paul Orndorff brings giant Ernie Ladd down to size with an elbowsmash to the back of the neck (above right).

TAG TEAM WRESTLING is no place for scientific wrestlers. There is simply too much violence for any of these chronic complainers to be successful. It is no coincidence that the current movement to have more than one referee officiate tag team matches was spearheaded by scientific wrestlers. These so-called rule-followers, finding they can't win, always try and change the rules.

Men make successful tag team combinations, not crybabies. The Tommy Riches and the Ted DiBiases always lose in tag team matches. They spend more time

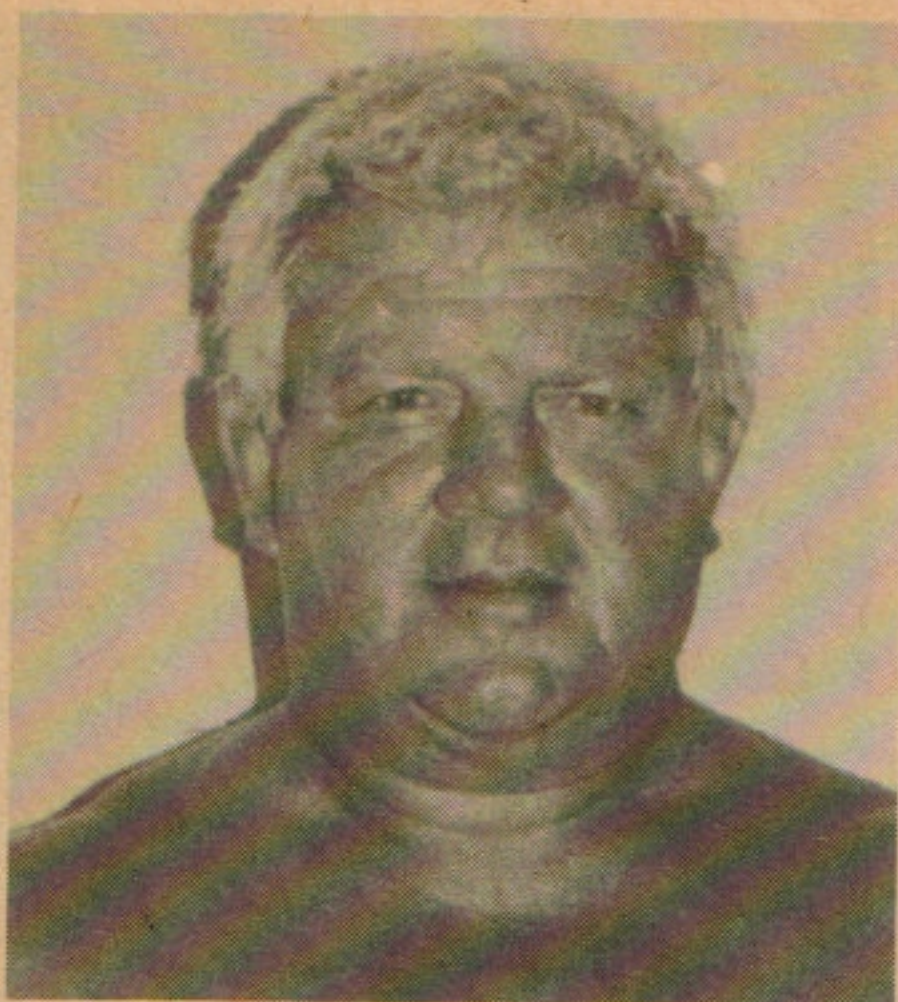
complaining to the referee about alleged double-teaming than they do wrestling. When you talk about *real* dream matches, you'd better put Greg Valentine and Paul Orndorff on the top of the list.

Both men know success means winning, not crying. I have watched both men wrestle in solo matches; their styles are similar. They don't pander to the fans or the commissions. They want to win, and they don't waste their time trying to be loved by fans who are too stupid to recognize their greatness anyway.

There wouldn't be a scientific tag

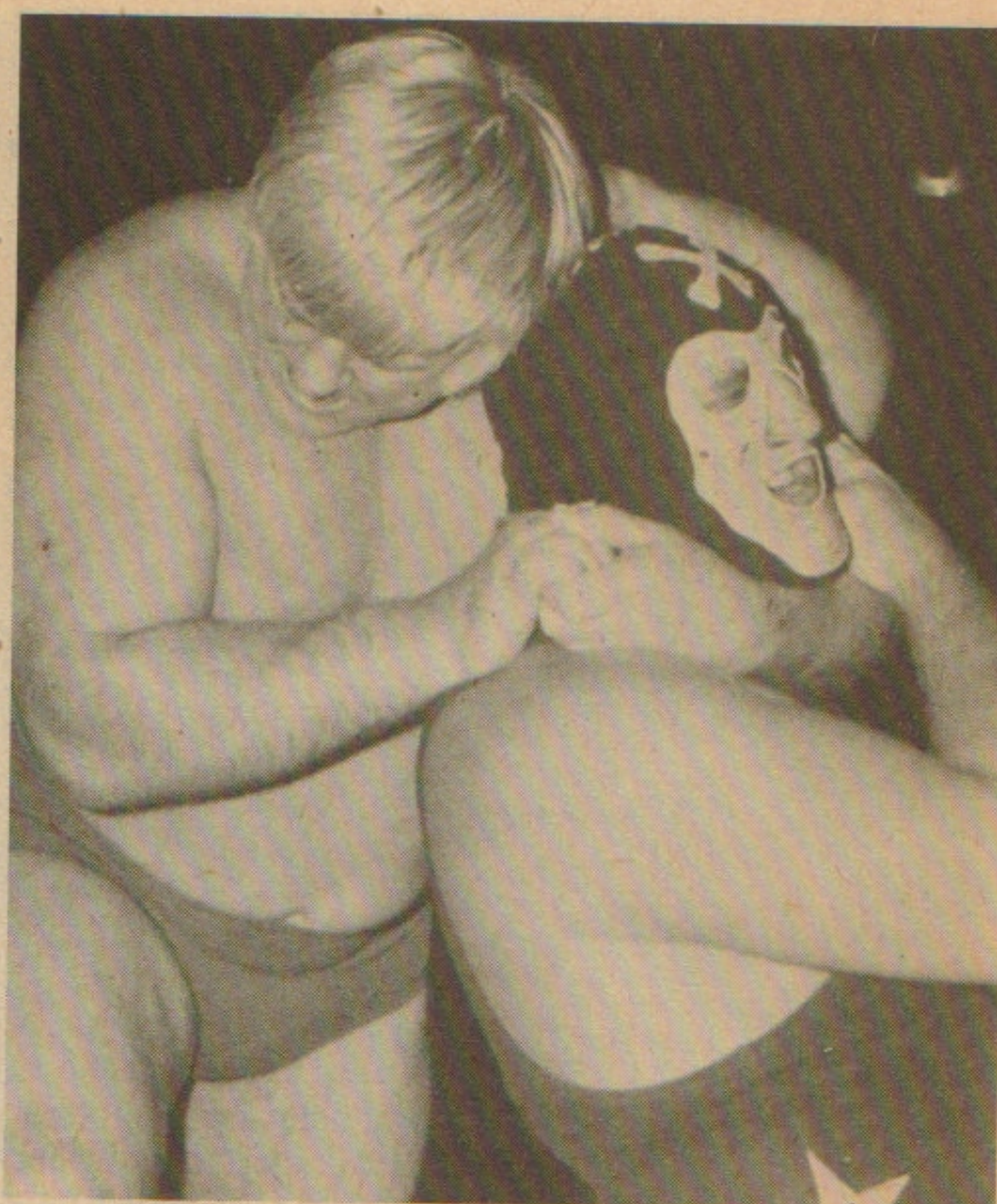
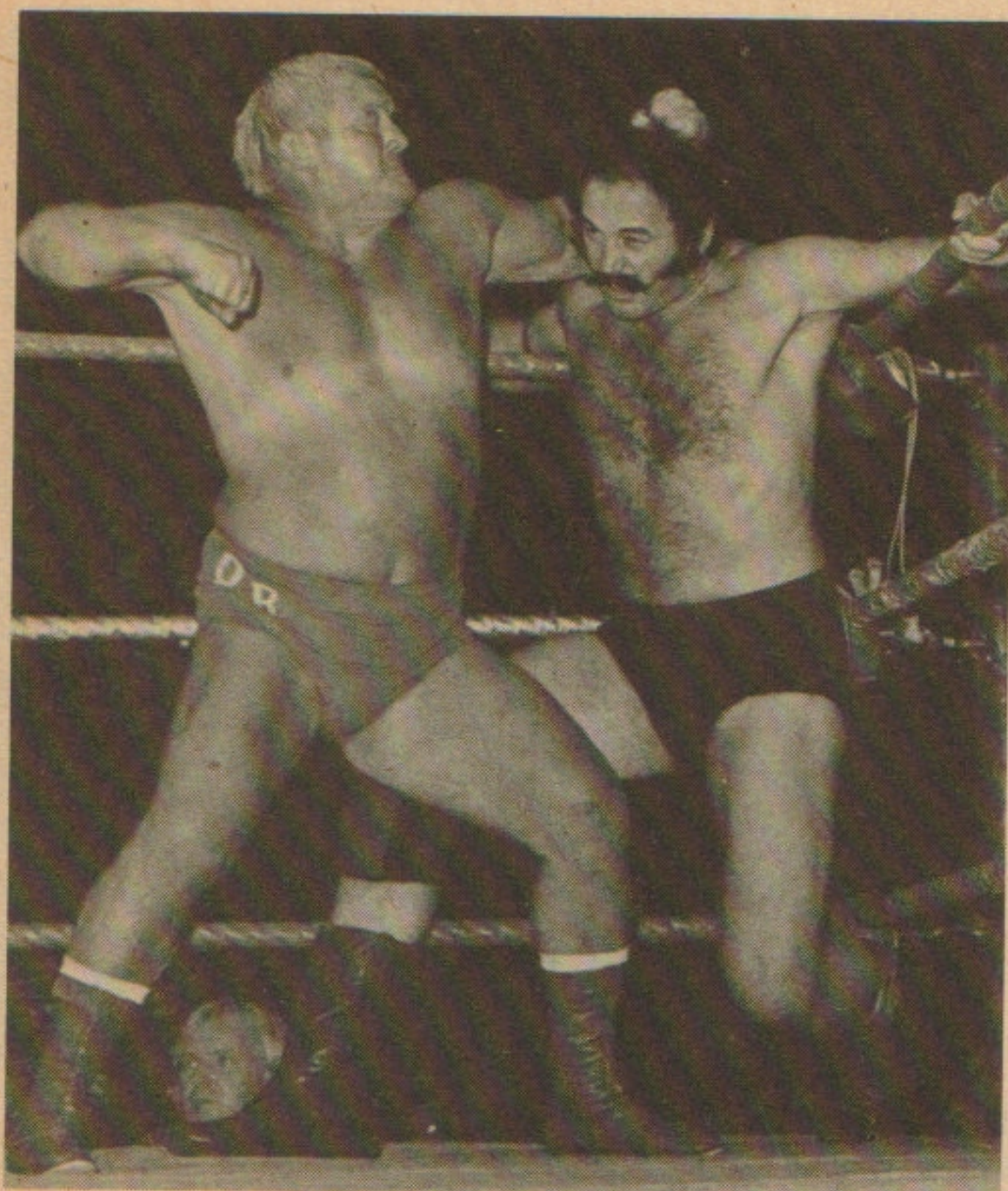
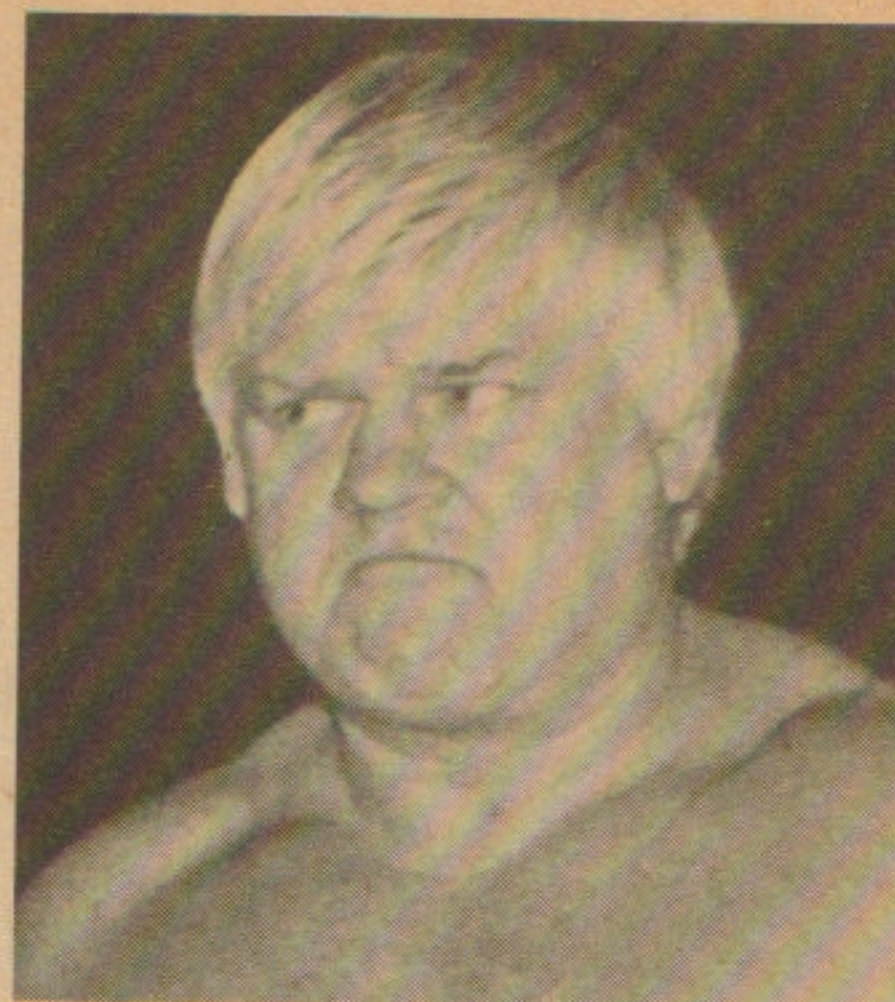
team anywhere that could stop them. Teams like Garea and Martel or Jack and Jerry Brisco, never known for their courage to begin with, would run away in terror at the prospect of meeting Valentine and Orndorff.

This is a dream pairing that can be made. Their teaming would prove two things: the greatness of aggressive wrestling and the sheer cowardice of those scientific toadies the fans love. For the sake of wrestling, Valentine and Orndorff must be brought together as soon as possible. □



BRUISER & CRUSHER

By Robert J. Thornton



Bruiser punishes Blackjack Lanza in 1976 when he and Crusher were AWA tag team champions (above left). Crusher, one of the sport's all-time tough men, applies a questionable chinlock (above right).

IT'S TOO BAD that politics and ideologies (outside the realm of wrestling) have prevented the best tag team in the sport from competing. The commissions, which rule wrestling, and, in our view at least, exercise far too much power, are all that are keeping Bruiser and Crusher from reforming their once-great tag team.

Crusher and Bruiser, once owners of the prestigious AWA tag team championship, were forced to split up years ago because, in the

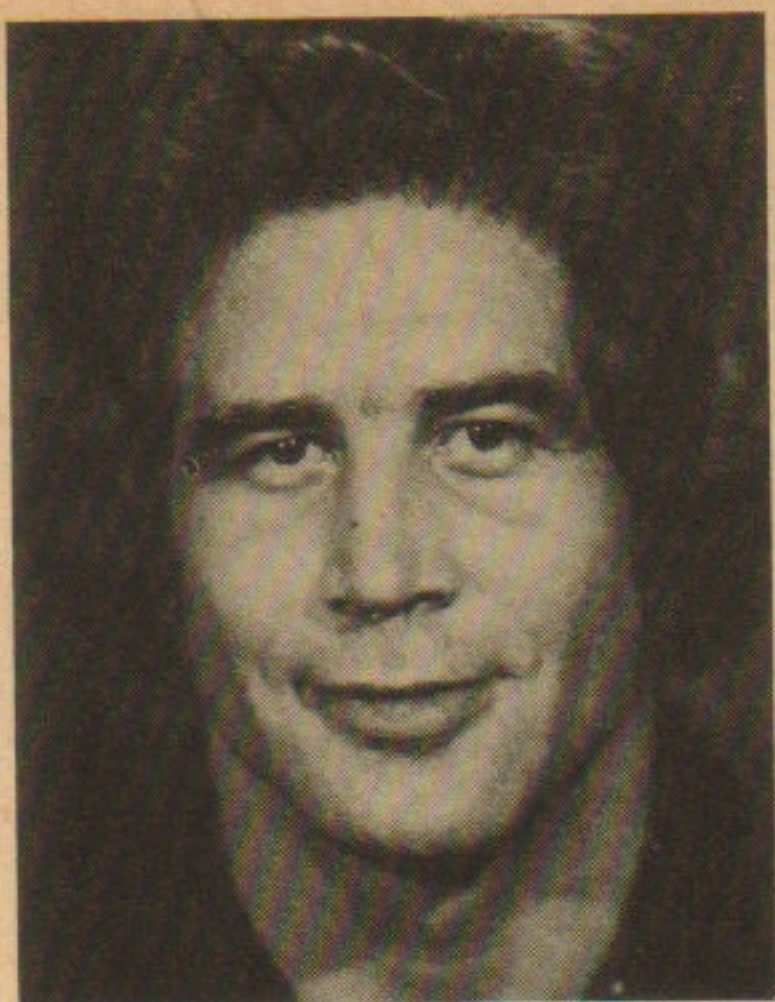
words of one power-that-be, "they just destroyed too many arenas." Well, this is wrestling, not some dance around the maypole. My dream team was once a reality. Only the undue influence of some power-hungry bureaucrats are keeping them apart.

They were great, and, if allowed, Bruiser and Crusher can be great again. I remember, during what is now called "Wrestling's Golden Age," how these two brawlers kept opponents constantly on the run with their style of controlled

mayhem.

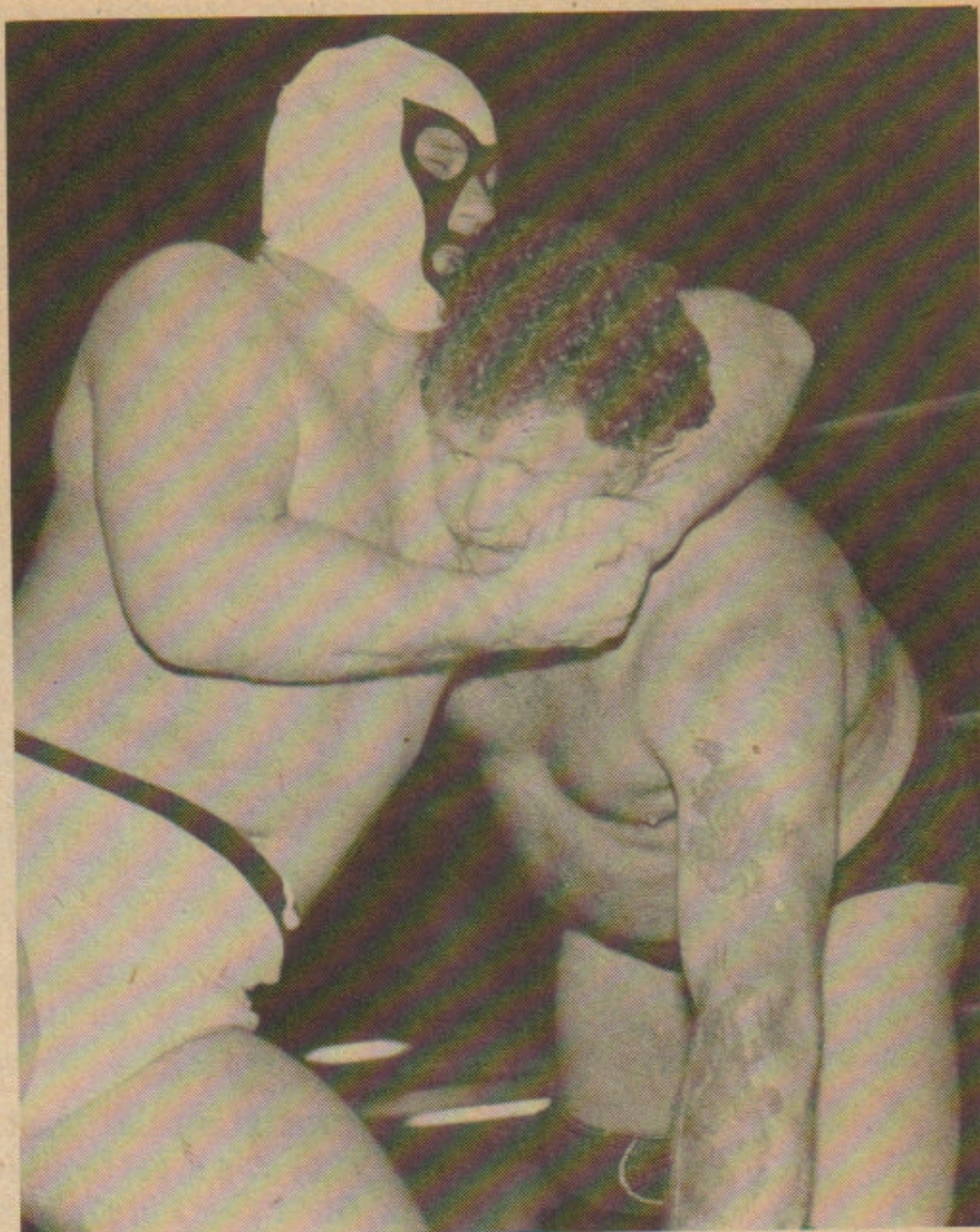
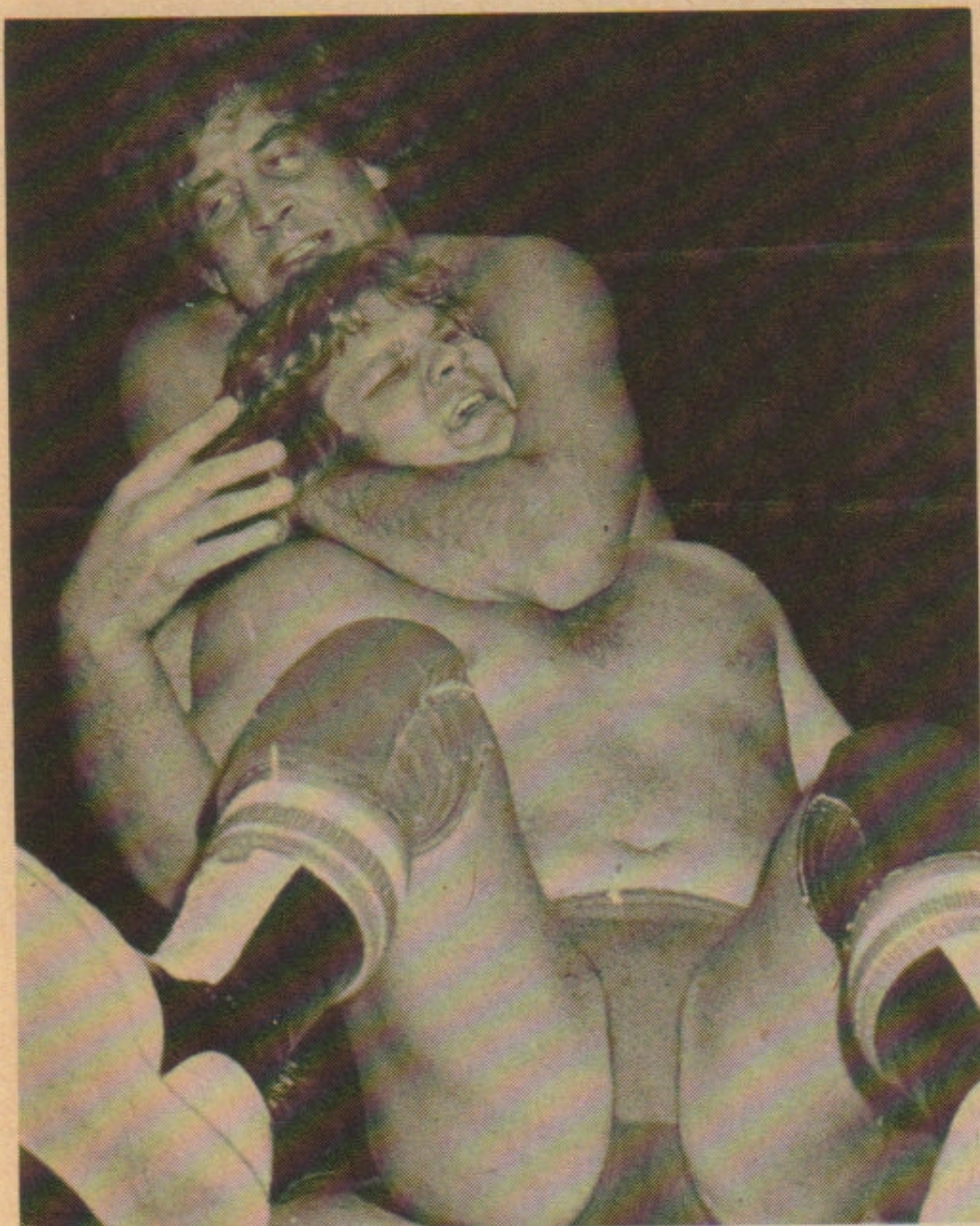
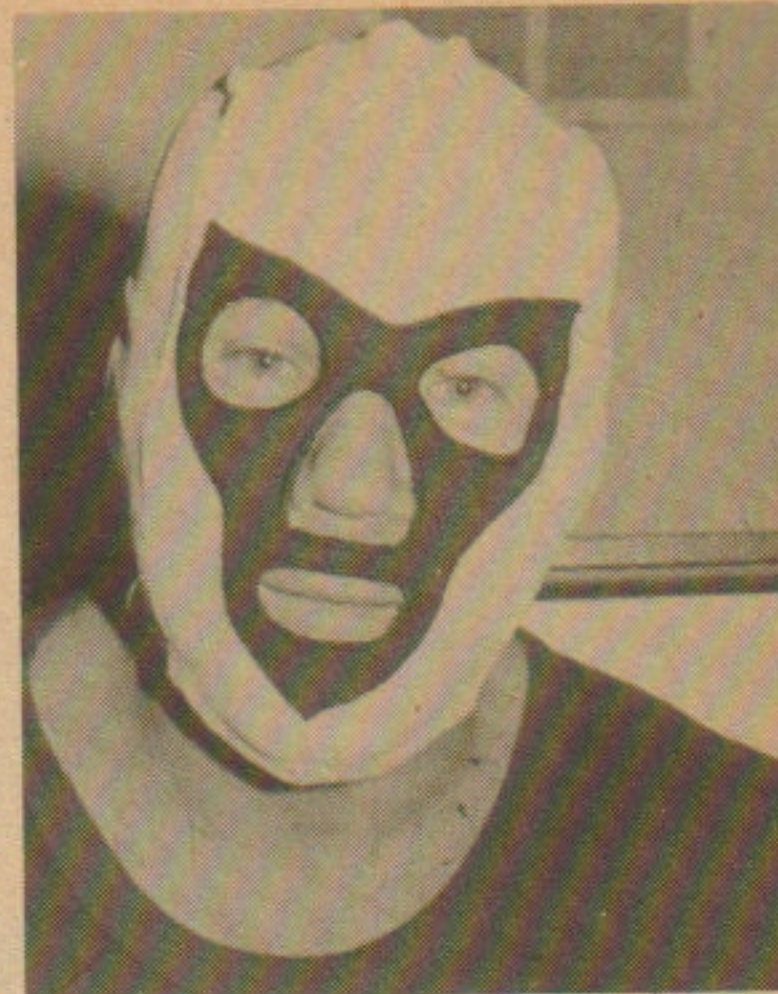
It is all well and good that others want to see dream teams that never were and (most probably) can never be. But once you've seen the very best, it is hard to request or accept anything less.

Let's get politics out of wrestling once and for all. It is time for the fan to take control and demand his (or her) rights. It is time, once again, for the greatest tag team ever, Bruiser and Crusher. □



JACK BRISCO & MR. WRESTLING II

By Matt Brock



Two of the sport's classier wrestlers, Jack Brisco and Mr. Wrestling II, weaken their opponents, Dick Slater (above left) and Harley Race (above right), with headlocks. Brisco and II would be a formidable duo.

LET'S GET ONE thing straight right from the start. I'm not a fan of tag team wrestling. Before the match you have two guys standing in one corner, slapping each other on the back. During the match, these same two guys keep reaching out to touch hands. It seems a little unnatural if you ask me. But since nobody did, and tag team wrestling is a fixture in the sport, we might as well hope for the best. And there is nobody better

than Mr. Wrestling II and Jack Brisco.

Leave all the fancy robes and the blond hair to men like the Valiant brothers. Give me II and Brisco any day. But I've always preferred meat and potatoes to fruit cocktail.

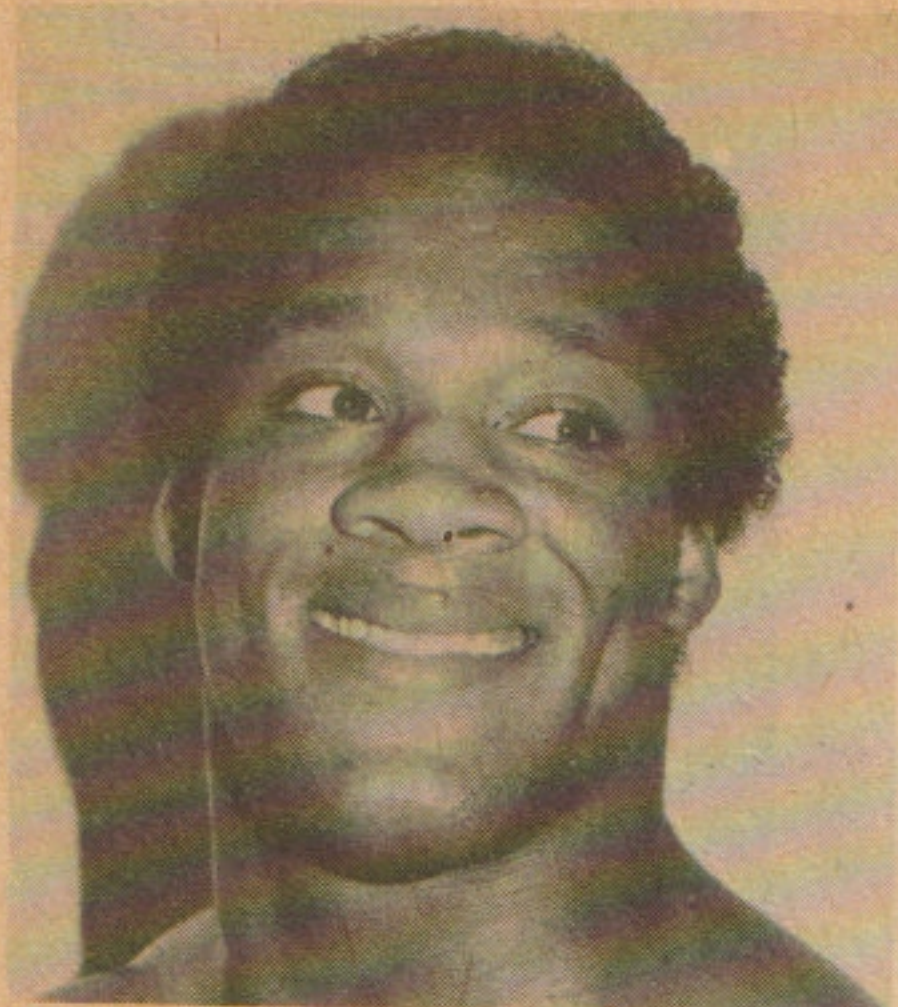
I like wrestlers who know their sport. And nobody knows wrestling better than Jack Brisco. He has been a consistent winner for more than 10 years. There are mountains less sturdy than

Jack Brisco.

Mr. Wrestling II complements Brisco like American cheese on a hamburger. He is another nonsense brawler who leaves flashiness to the flash in the pans.

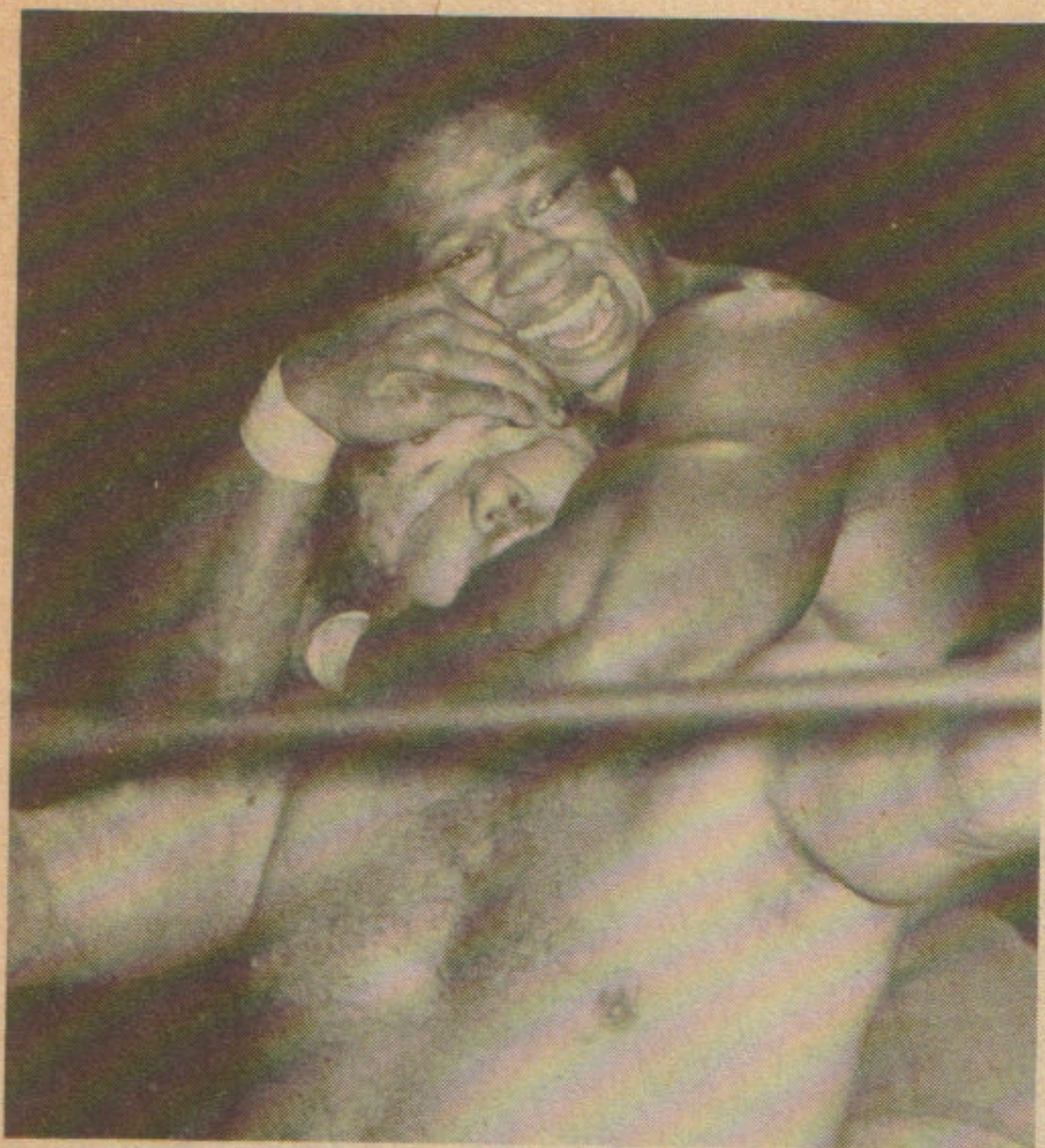
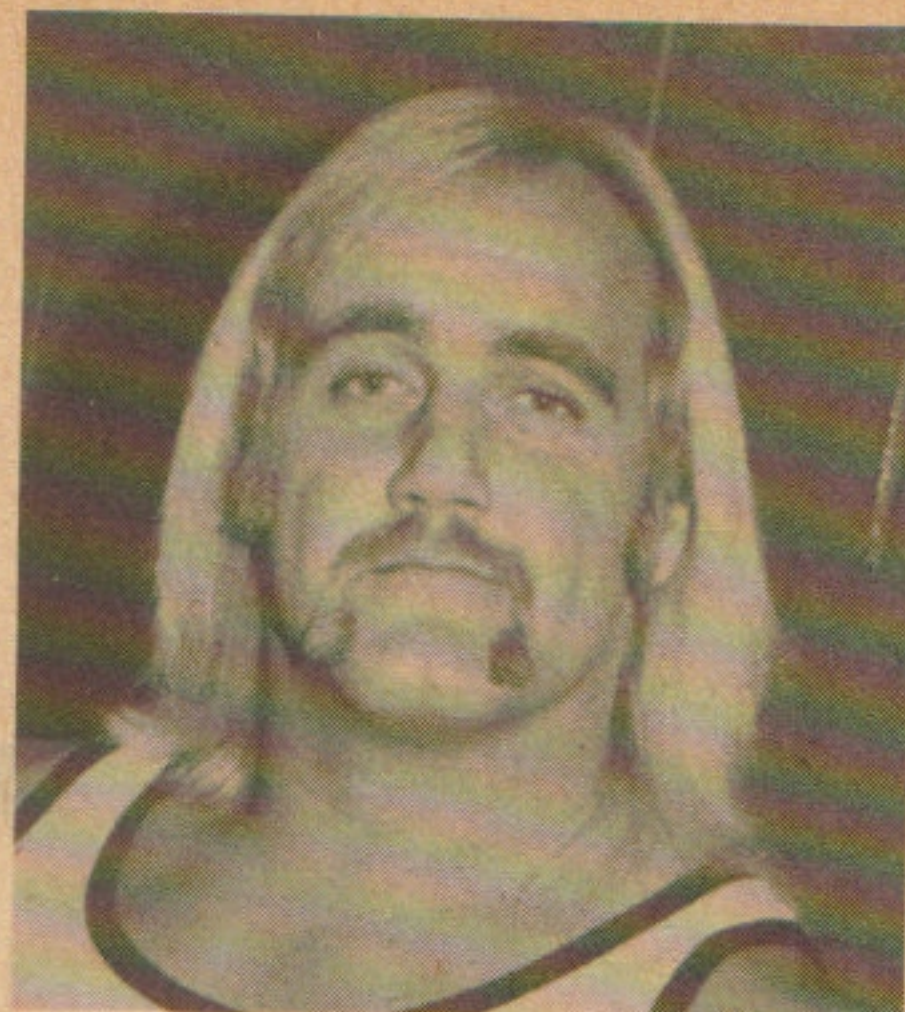
Between Brisco and Wrestling II there is enough wrestling knowledge to humble a canyon-full of computers. Let's get them together and turn them loose.

Who knows. It might even make me a fan of tag team wrestling. □



TONY ATLAS & HULK HOGAN

By Craig Peters



With Tony Atlas' powerful arms wrapped around his head in a sleeperhold, Harley Race is very fortunate to be able to get to the ropes to force a break (above left). Hogan tries to snap Andre the Giant's back in a rare encounter with a larger opponent (above right).

A YEAR AGO, a tag team of Hulk Hogan and Tony Atlas was an impossibility. A year ago, they were locked in a violent feud. Two of the most powerfully built men in wrestling, their rivalry was a natural.

Their partnership would be just as natural.

Nobody spends more time in the gymnasium working out than these two. And what a pleasure it is to watch them in the ring, where all those hours of pumping iron are utilized against human competition. Of course, their skills stretch

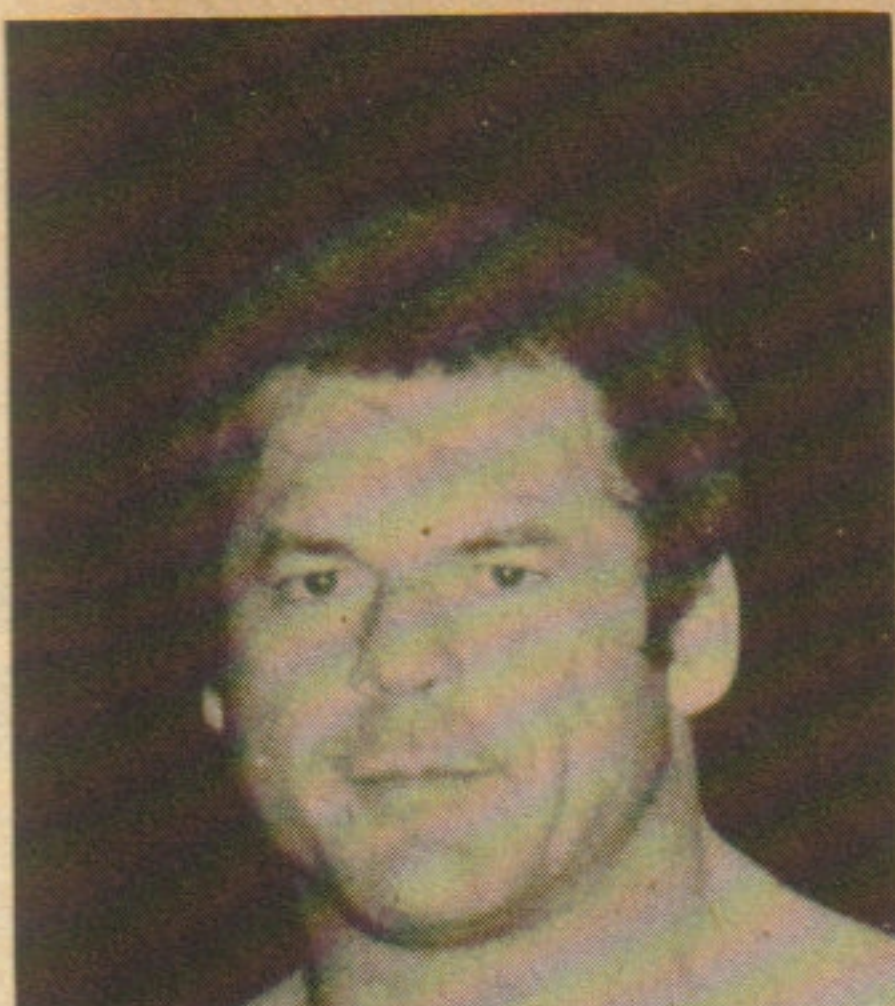
far beyond mere strength—they are both quite capable wrestlers—but their forte is strength. Raw strength.

The Hogan-Atlas battles of a year ago were extraordinary. Observers agreed that the two seemed more intent on proving their strength to each other and the fans than actually winning the matches. Vying for acclaim in the WWF, quite naturally they resented each other.

Today, things have changed. Though they now wrestle in separate parts of the country, their

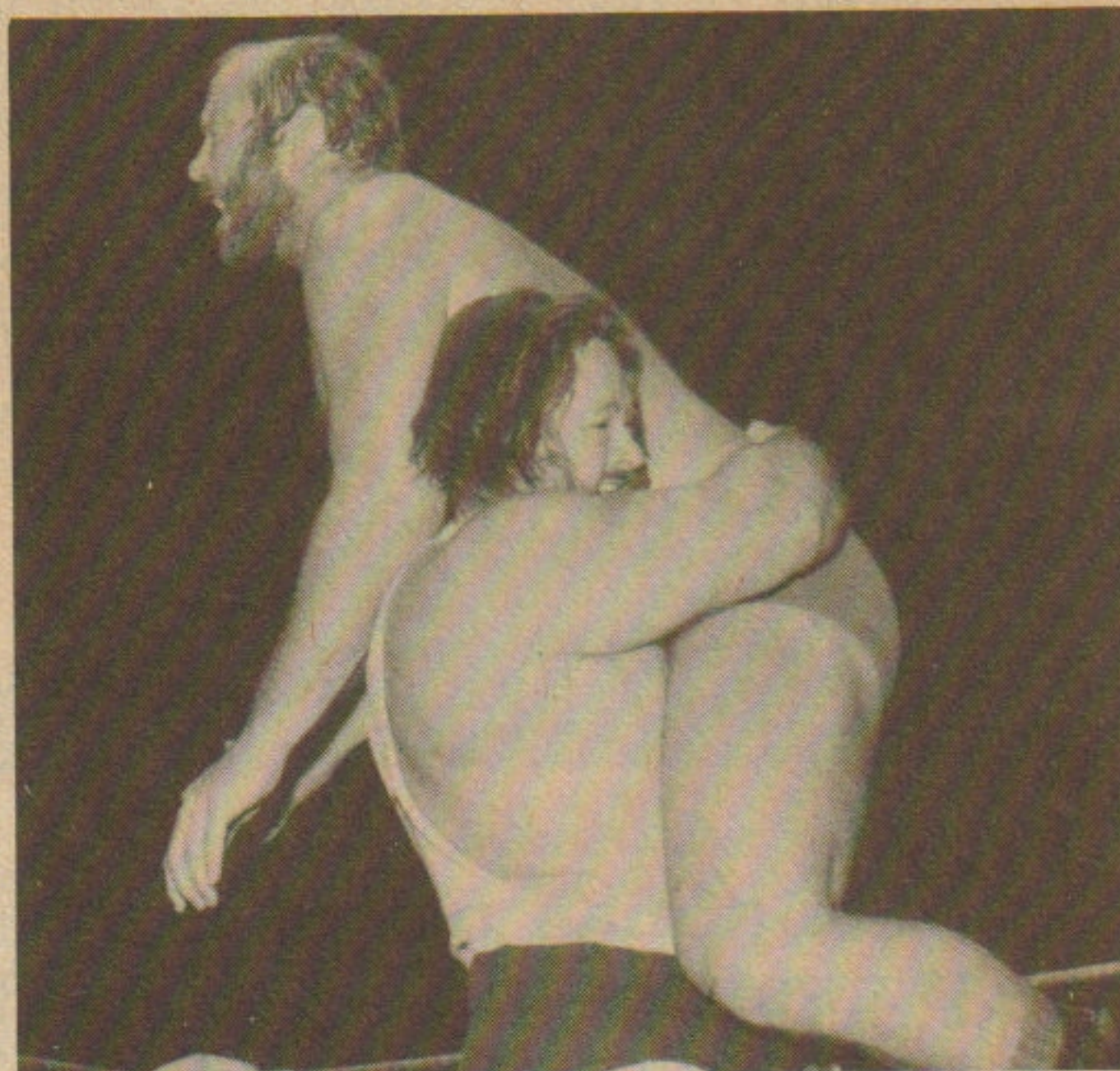
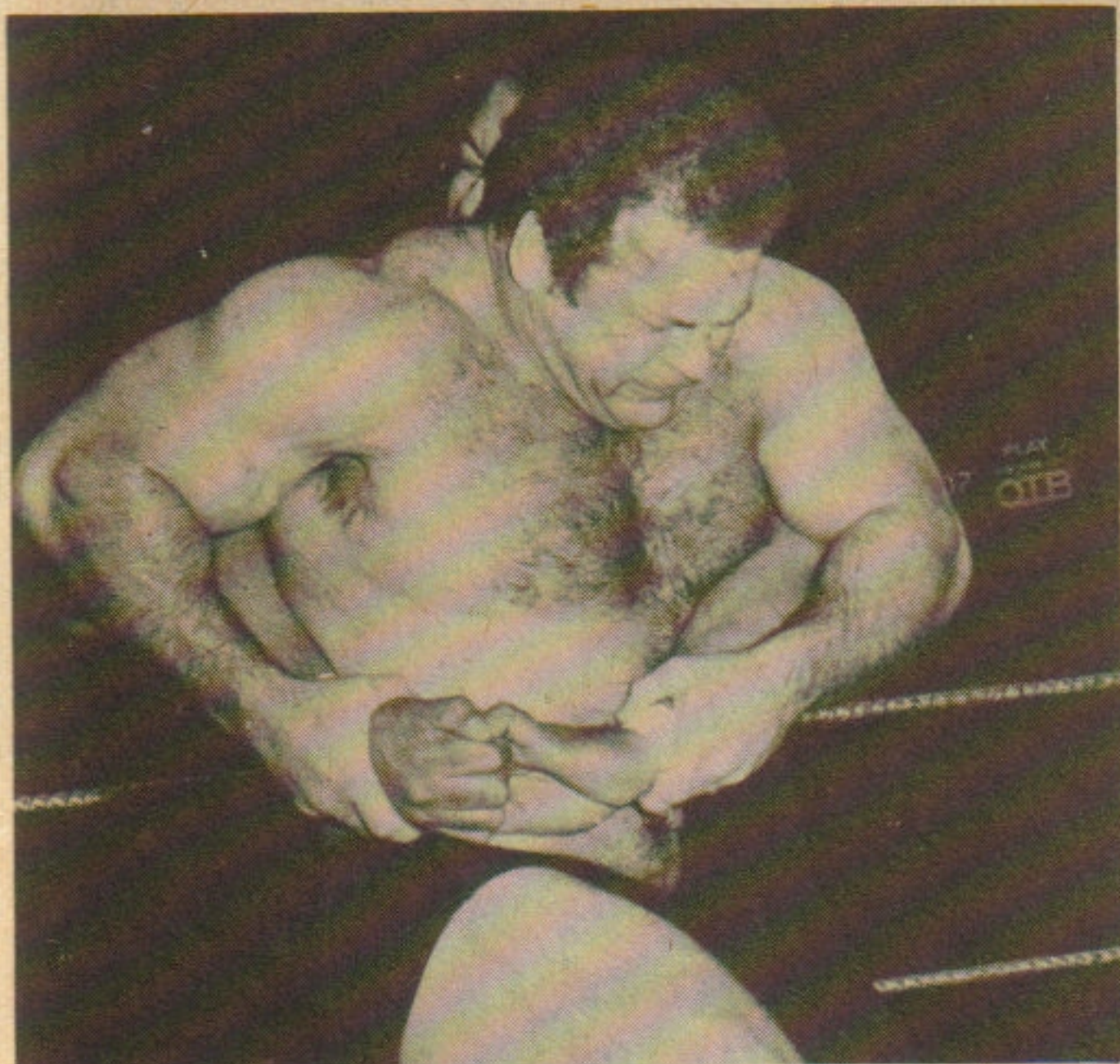
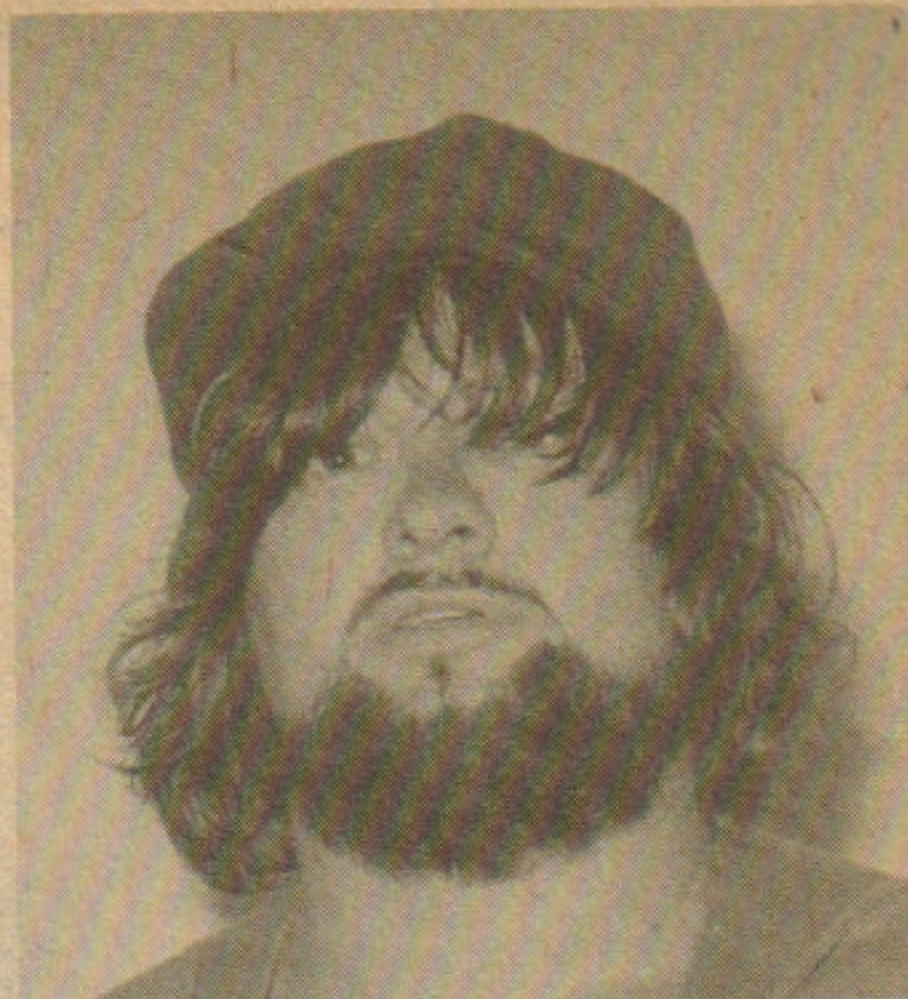
eventual combination does not seem so farfetched. Hogan, while still his own number-one fan, has acquired a big following in the AWA. The fans are behind him now, and he has responded well to their support. He draws on their cheers to add to his already super-human strength.

Atlas has always been loved by the fans, and has always been open-minded about his tag team partners. When asked what he thinks about an Atlas-Hogan tag team, Tony responded with one word: "Awesome." □



IVAN PUTSKI & MIGHTY IGOR

By Steve Farhood



Ivan Putski uses Polish Power to free himself from the grasp of Samoan Afa (above left). Mighty Igor squeezes the wind out of Dory Funk Jr. (above right). There are no limits to what these Polish greats could accomplish as a team.

TALK ABOUT YOUR daily doubles! My dream team is a perfect combination that pays boxcar numbers. Parlay Mighty Igor and Ivan Putski and what do you get? A lock to win any tag team title in the world.

The most important factor in any successful tag team is the similarity of the two partners' styles. Igor and Putski's styles go way past similar. They are virtually identical.

Before I became a wrestling journalist, I won a good deal of money from people who were willing to bet me that Igor and Putski were the same person. Everybody seemed fooled by their

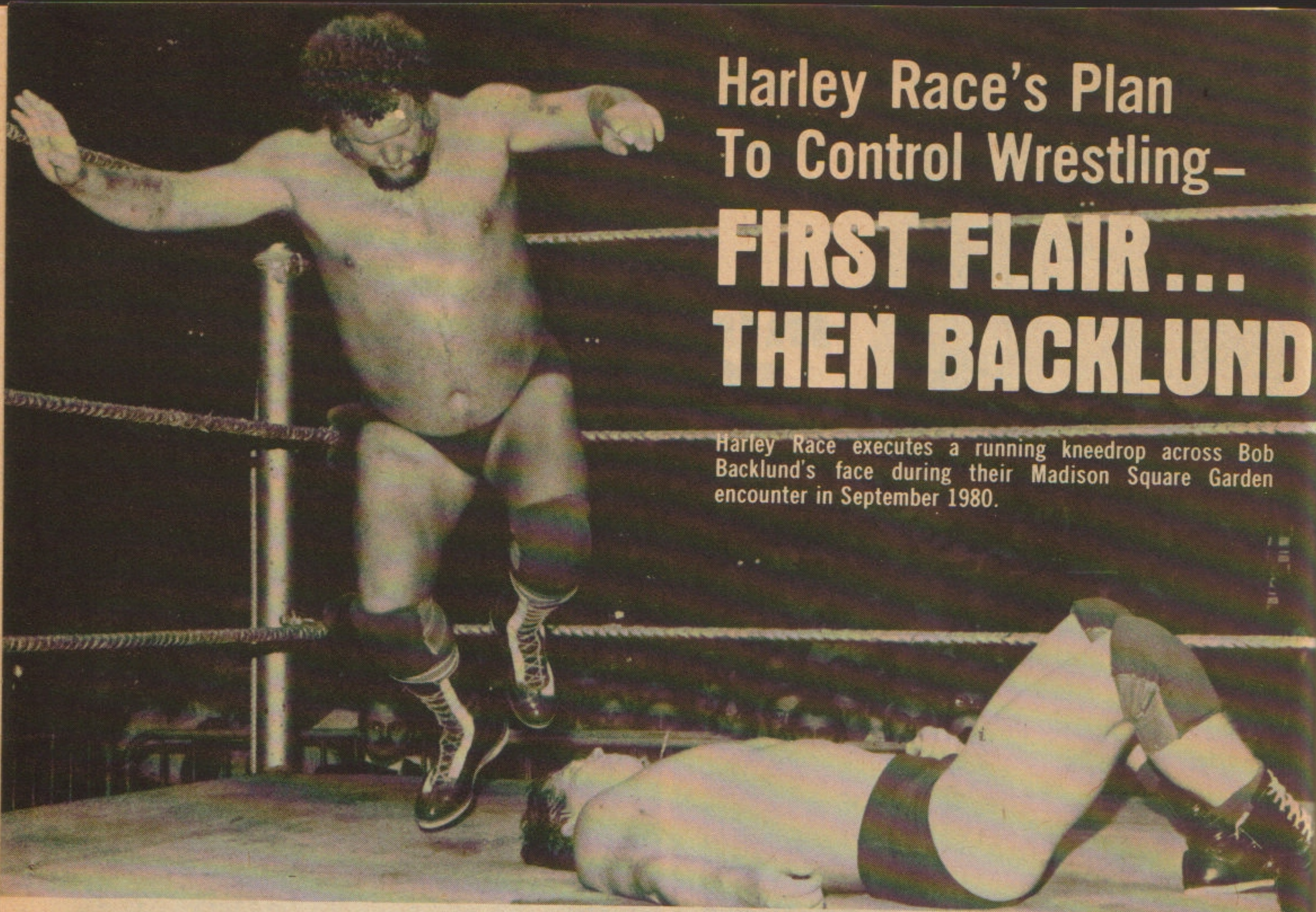
identical styles. In addition, early in his career, Putski even looked like Igor. I cleaned up on my bets because I had proof that the two men were indeed two men—a tattered copy of an old *Wrestler* magazine which gave undeniable proof that Igor and Putski were separate but equal human beings.

Can you imagine Putski and Igor as a tag team? It would be like teaming Secretariat and Seattle Slew in a relay race against a mule and a pig. Strength upon strength, power upon power. If you looked in the dictionary under the word "invincible," you would see a picture of Putski and Igor.

This is indeed a dream team.

There are simply no weaknesses. Some purists may say both men lack speed. While that may be true, I don't think it really qualifies as a weakness. When a wrestler is as strong as either Putski or Igor, speed is unnecessary. Remember, a wrestling ring is a small area and a match lasts a long time. Sooner or later, Putski and Igor would catch their opponents and twist their faces into Pla-Doh.

Here's some advice you can take to the bank: If Putski and Igor ever formed a tag team, they would never lose. Now that's what I call a Dream Team! □



Harley Race's Plan To Control Wrestling— **FIRST FLAIR... THEN BACKLUND**

Harley Race executes a running kneedrop across Bob Backlund's face during their Madison Square Garden encounter in September 1980.

Like a man obsessed, Harley Race has been in heavy pursuit of his seventh NWA championship belt. Most men would think that goal to be more than enough. Not Race. Barely content to take Ric Flair's NWA title, Race now says he wants Bob Backlund's WWF belt as well

IT GETS PRETTY cold in Kansas City, Missouri, when the dog days of winter come in. All you really feel like doing is staying inside and avoiding the cold any way you can.

Harley Race has a particular way of his own. He trains and plans. He trains for the big ones, the matches against the major titleholders. He plans for the future, for the day when he will gain an unprecedented seventh NWA championship victory.

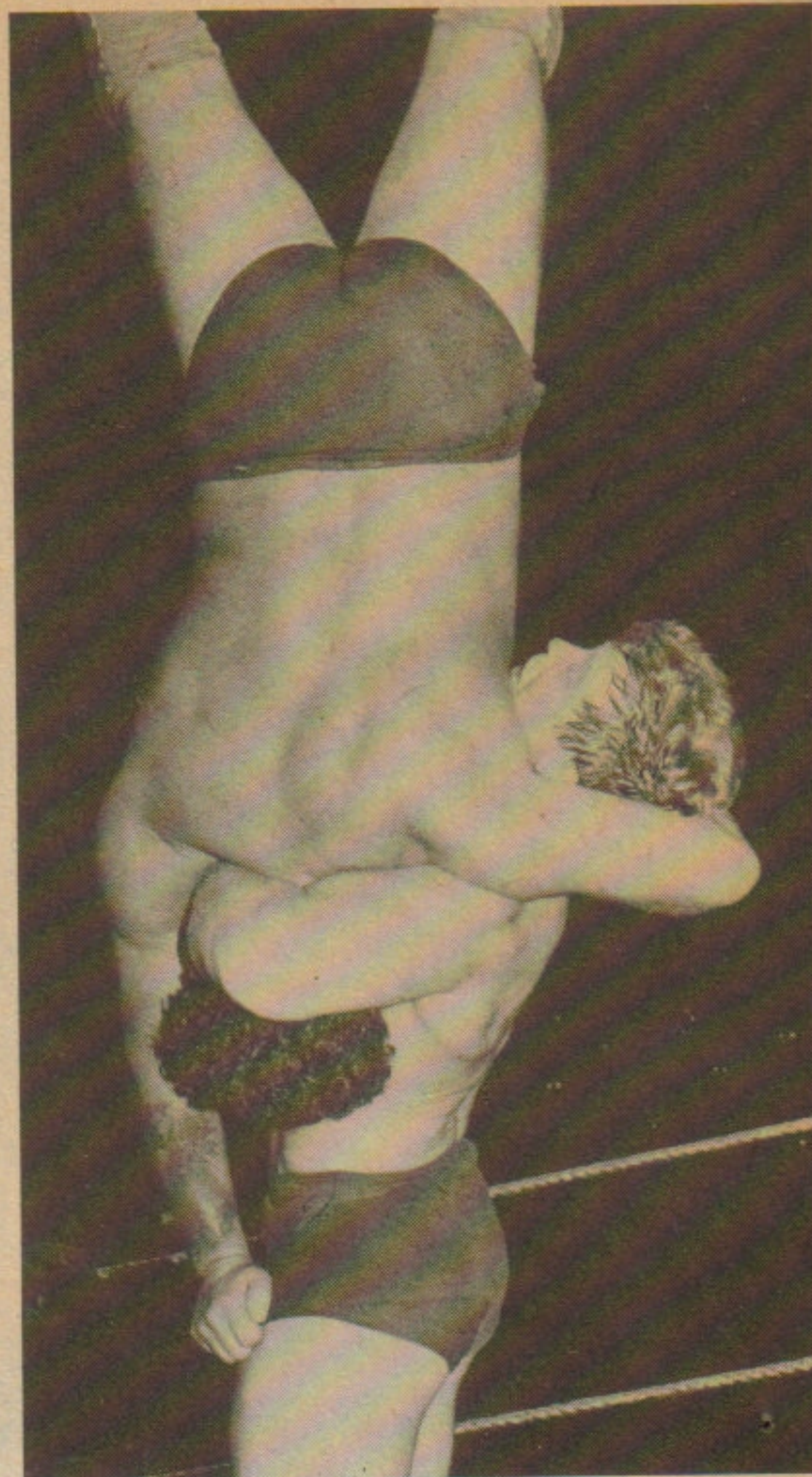
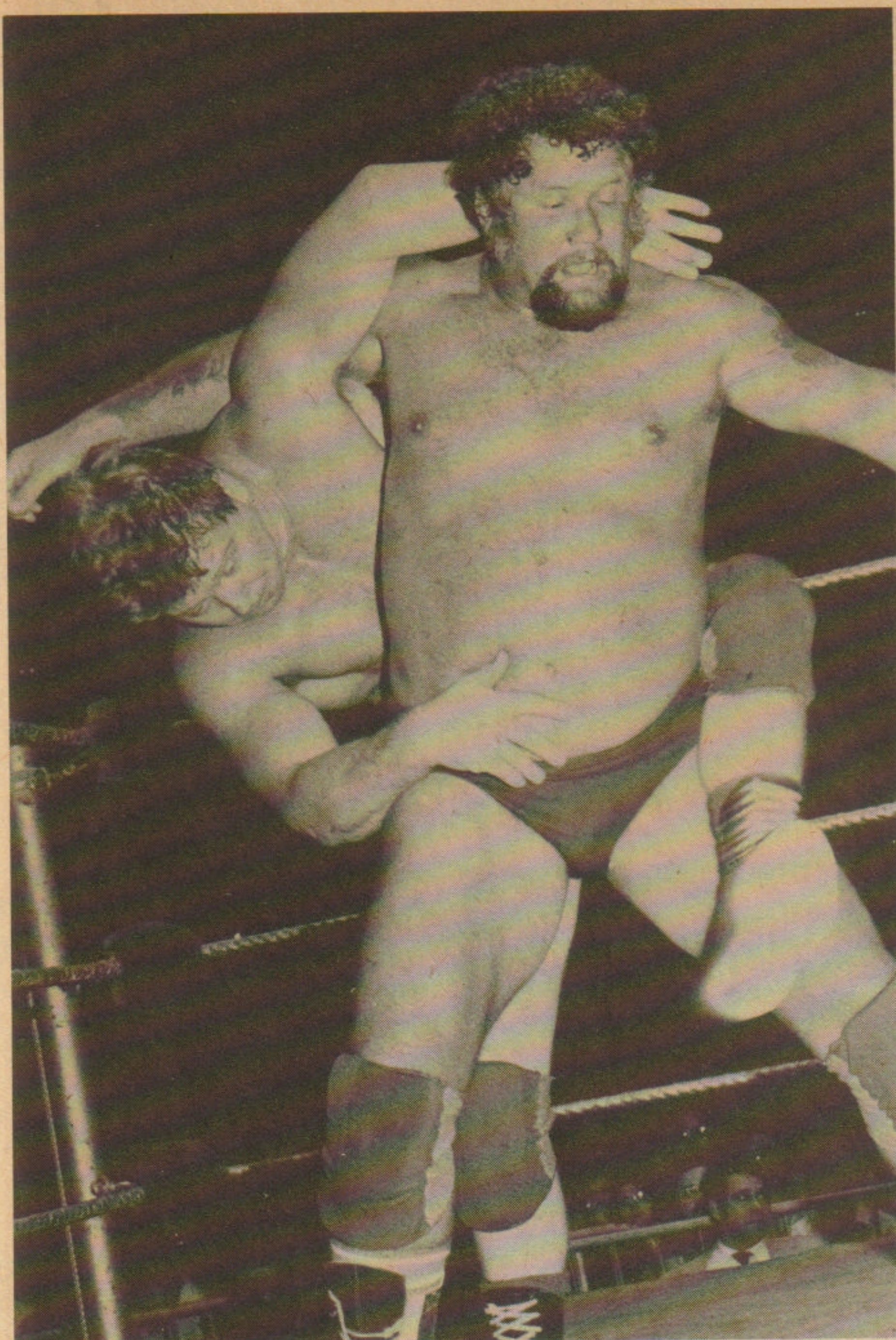
The plans that Harley Race has been formulating are precise and cunning. But his

goal goes beyond a mere NWA title. He wants to take that championship and then unify the heavyweight titles of the NWA and the WWF.

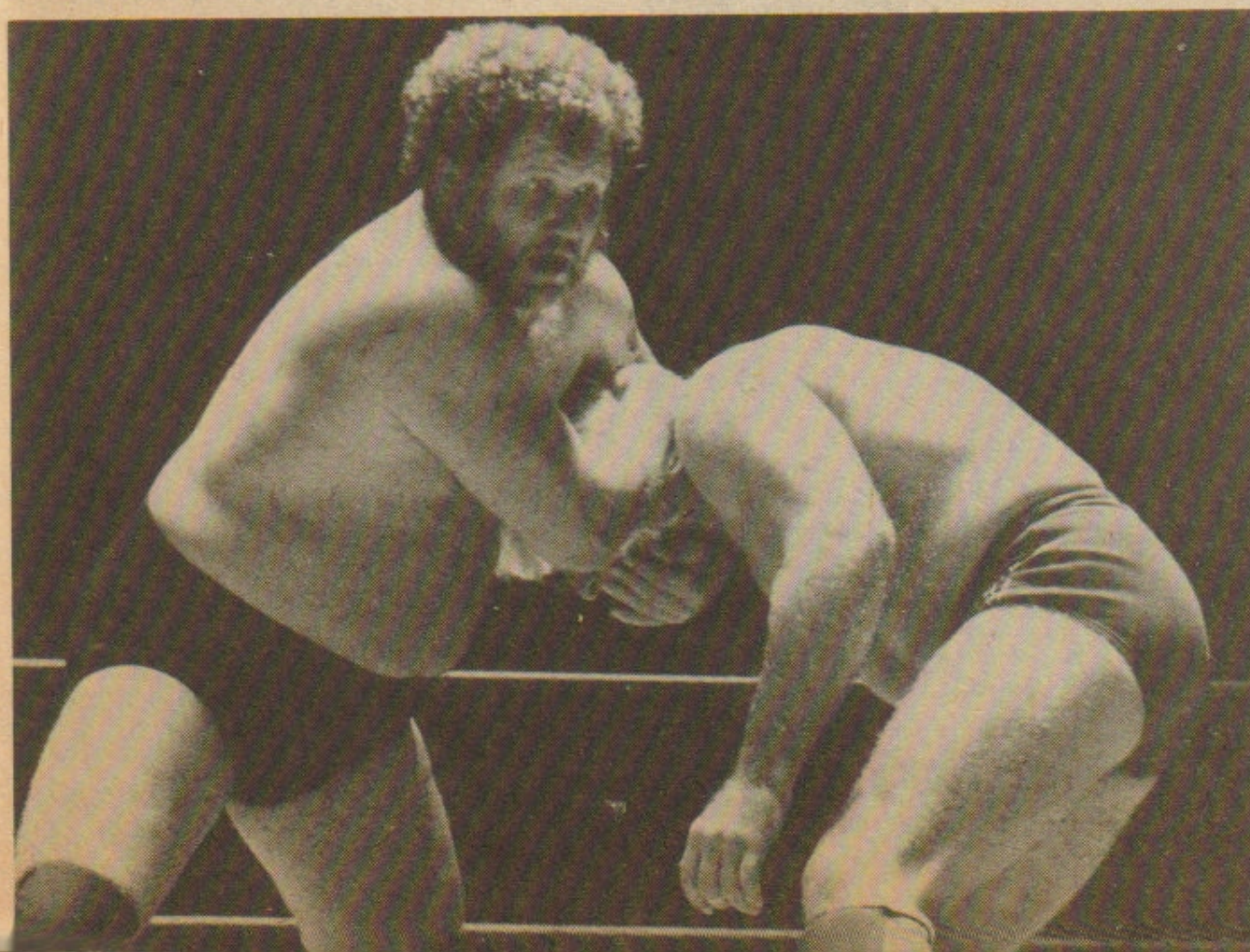
"I had been thinking over my plans for how I'm going to take the NWA belt," Race explained, "and I got to thinking about what it all means. Look, I'm going to be NWA champ again, and that's all there is to it. I'm certainly not going to let any young punk stand in my way, and once I get my shot at Flair, the championship will just fall into my hands.

"So winning the belt again won't be very tough at all," Race continued. "Actually, with Flair on top, it should probably be pretty easy. Then the question is what do I do next? What other goal can there be for a champion like me? The answer is simple: go after Backlund next.

"Just imagine," said Race with a gleam in his eyes, "the man who is the champion of the NWA and the WWF would virtually control all of wrestling! First I destroy Flair, then I obliterate Backlund, then I'll control wrestling! Nothing will



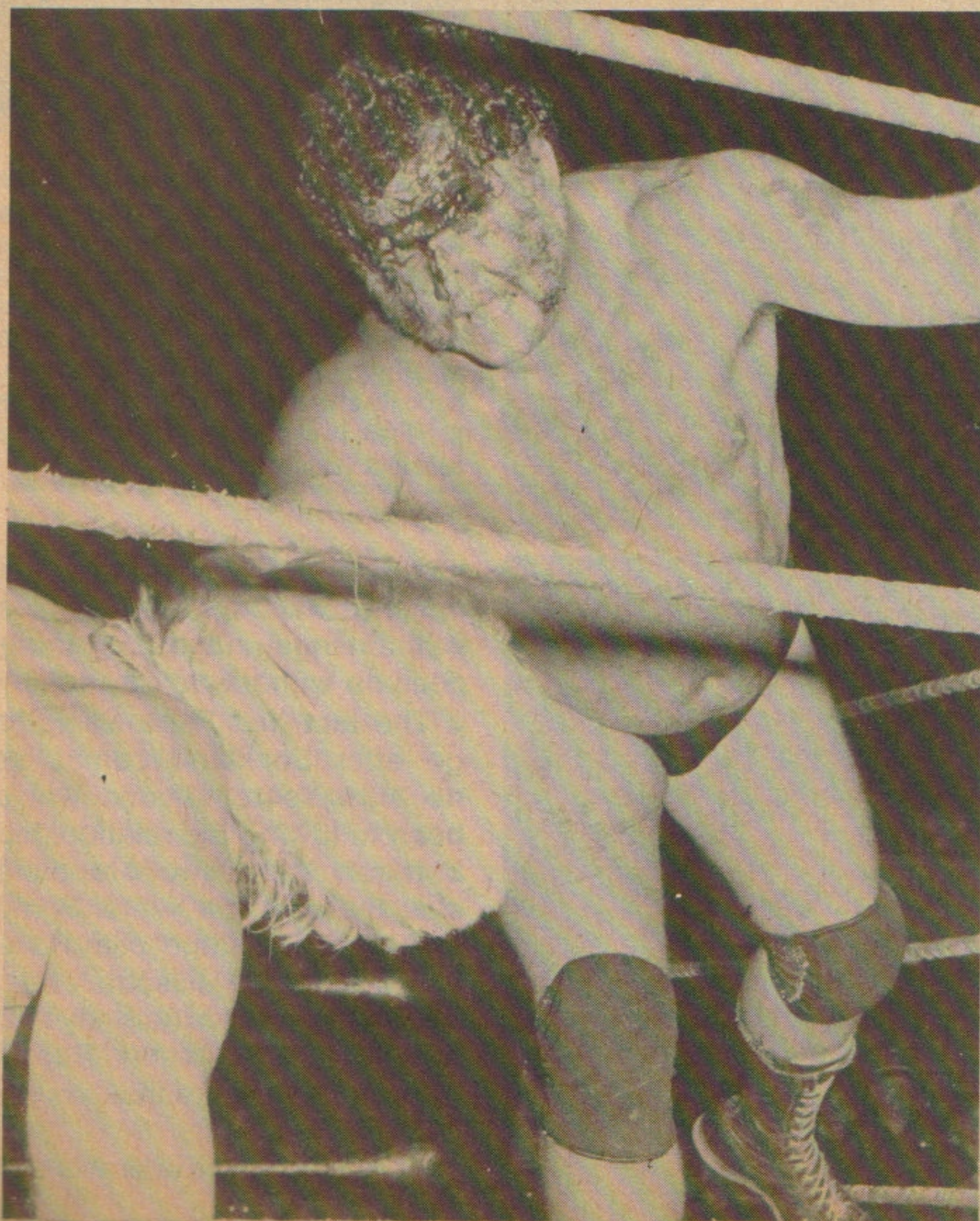
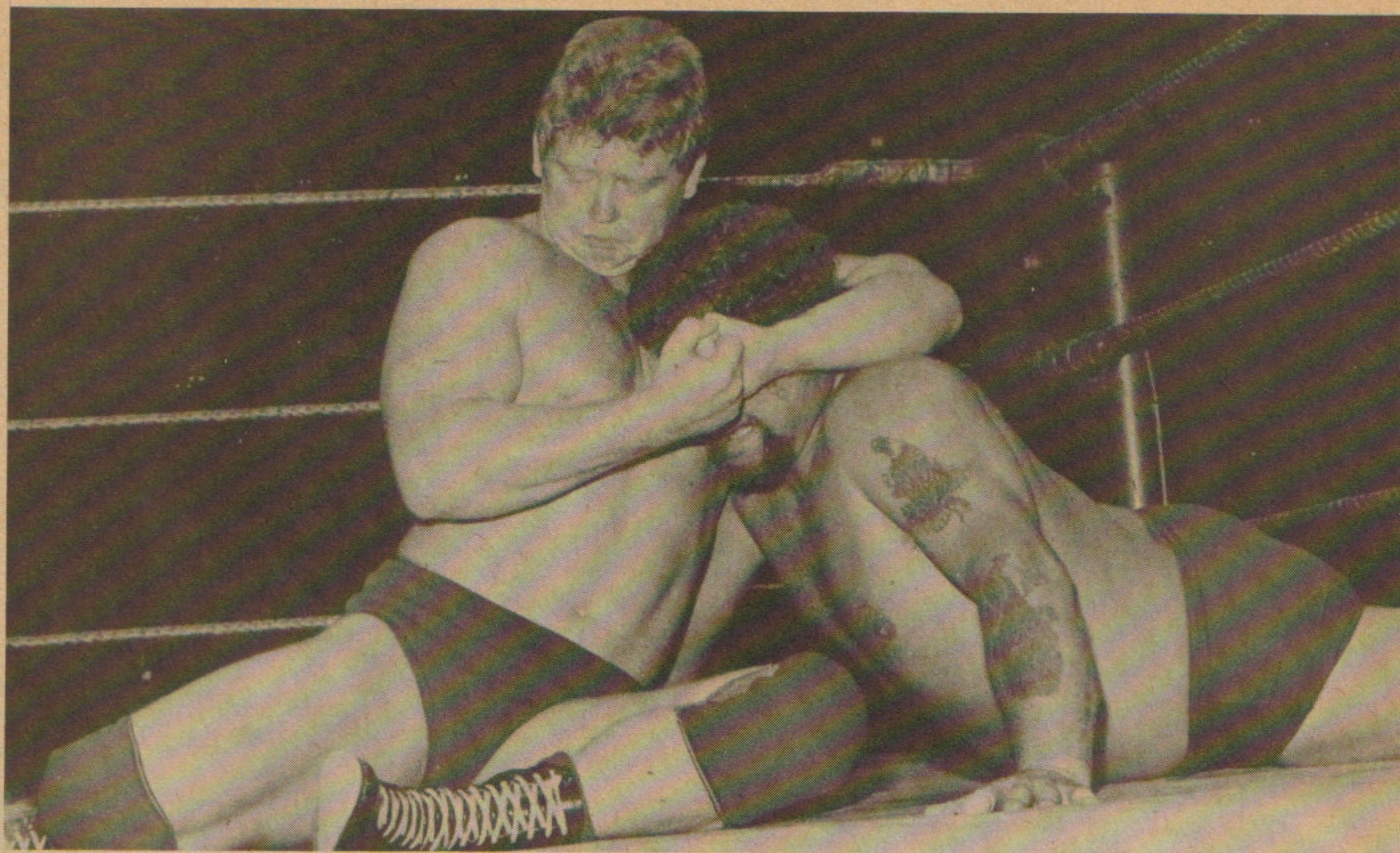
The match that was intended to settle two-thirds of the championship puzzle ended in an inconclusive Harley Race disqualification. Backlund traps Race in an abdominal stretch (left) and a vertical suplex (above). Race would like to wrestle for Backlund's WWF title again, but only after he defeats NWA champion Ric Flair, whom he holds in a reverse headlock (below left).



happen in wrestling, no matches will be made, no titles will change hands, *nothing* goes on without my say so!"

The fact that Race wants to go after Backlund comes as no surprise to anyone who's been following the relationship between these two grapplers over the past few years. Some time ago, Backlund beat Race to win the Missouri title. Apparently, it's an indignity that has not faded from Race's memory . . . a score that has yet to be settled.

Assuming that Race were to



Backlund will be forced to release his grip as Race's legs are under the ropes (above). Race and Flair have already had a number of bloody matches (left), but Harley has undergone an intensive training period and feels ready to go for a record eighth NWA title.

be successful in his quest, it would seem to have a devastating effect on both the WWF and the NWA right from the start.

"It would throw both organizations into total chaos," said one NWA representative. "First of all, you would have one man defending two belts, which means that he would have to take on twice as many challengers. Heaven knows that the obligations of a champion now are heavy enough, to double those obligations is humanly impossible.

"What would have to happen," the official continued, "is that both the NWA and the WWF would fall to the mercy of the single champion. He would be able to pick and choose matches, he would determine

(Continued on page 62)

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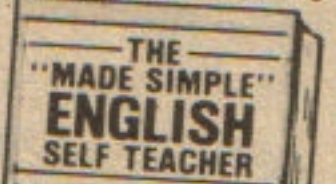
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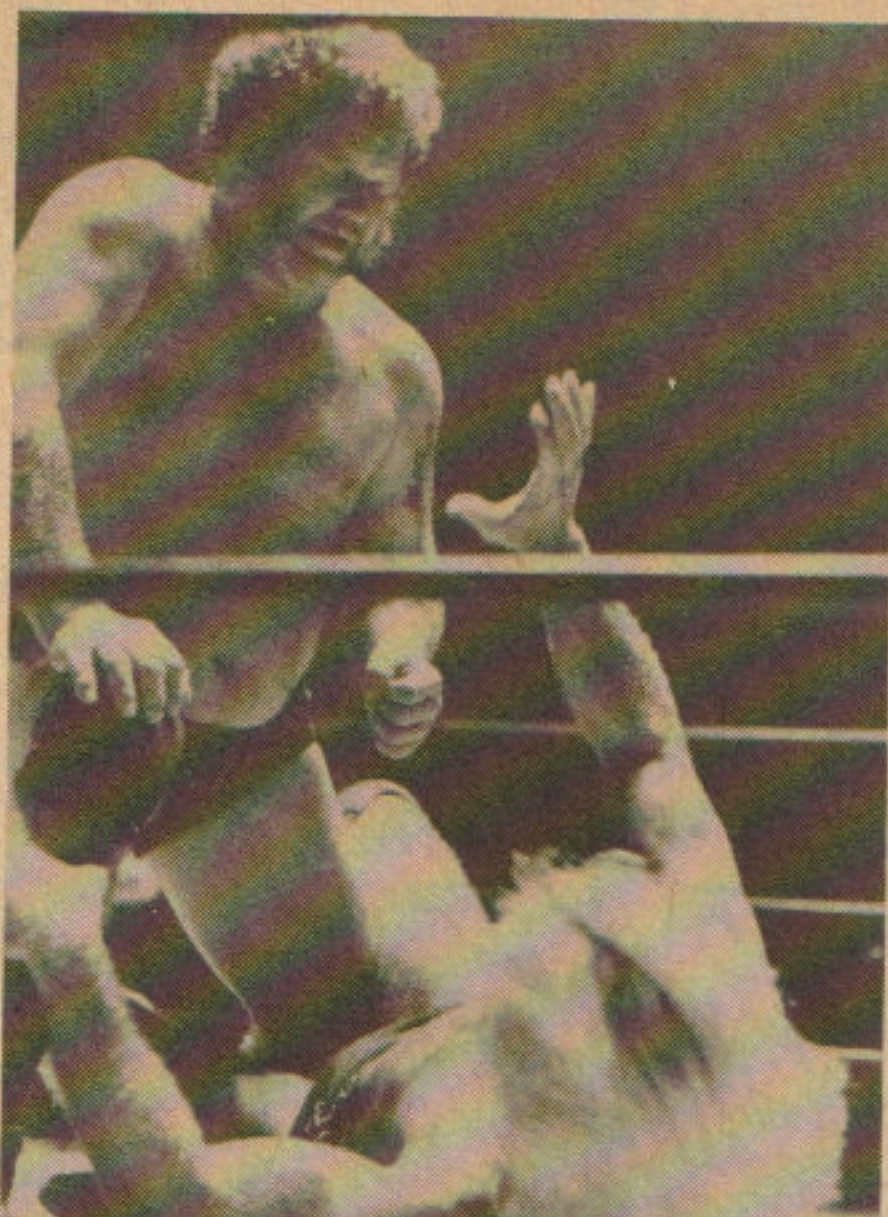
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HARLEY RACE

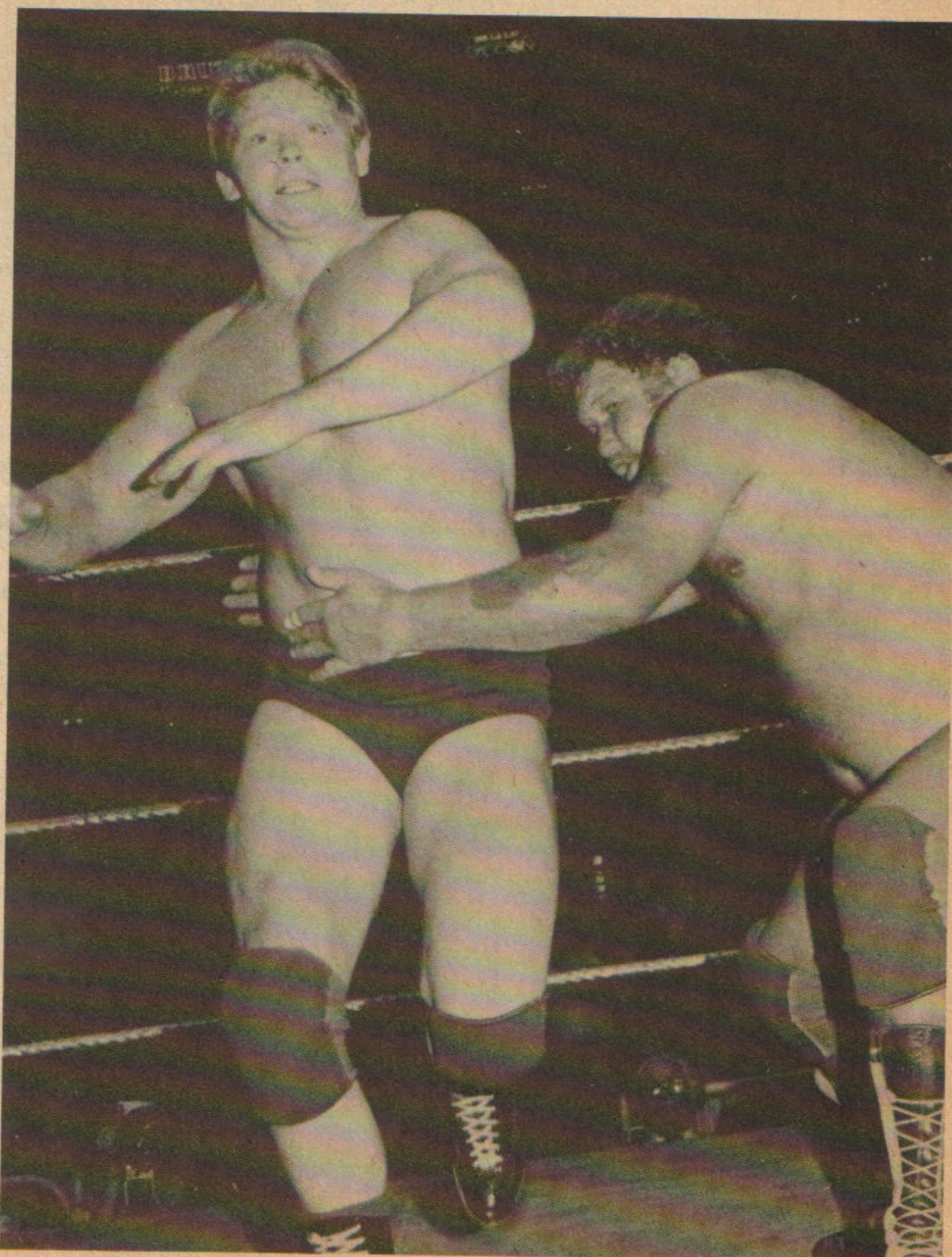
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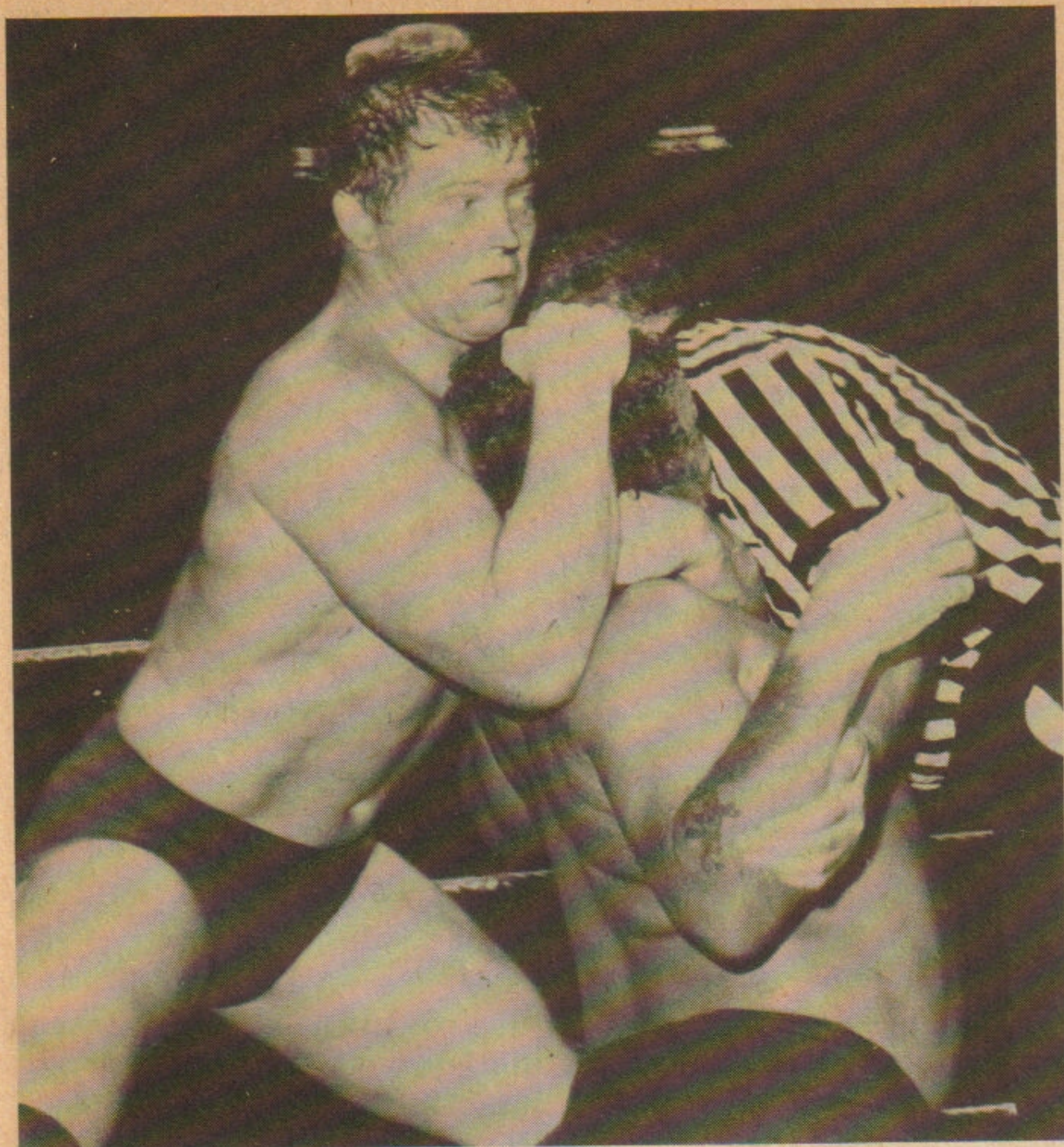


the future of both organizations and, in doing that, would almost singlehandedly control the course of wrestling today and into the future."

Of course, Ric Flair is one man who isn't about to let Race even come close to achieving

Flair throws his arms up in a plea for mercy, but Race has never given any and is not about to start (left). Harley maneuvers Backlund into the ropes and will catch him with a forearm smash on the rebound (below). Backlund rarely uses the sleeperhold and he is unsuccessful against Race (opposite right).





his stated goal.

"Harley Race has been in this business too long," said Flair. "He's got to be going crazy if he thinks he can pull a stunt like that. Thinking he can beat me to get the NWA belt is bad enough, but thinking he can be on top of two wrestling alliances at one time? The man must be going insane."

Yet despite the doubts and ridicule of many people who follow wrestling, Race stands firm in his belief that unheard of as it may be, he can and will maintain two heavyweight championships at once.

"There's no reason why it can't be done," said Race. "It's just like baseball. The winner of the World Series is the champion of both the National and American Leagues. Well, that's how it's going to be with me. I'll be the champion of the NWA and the WWF. No big trick, except that everyone else

in wrestling thinks it can't be done, especially Flair and Backlund. Well, that'll be their undoing. They'll have to learn by doing, and they won't like the lesson that I'm going to teach them."

So the training continues in chilly Kansas City. Race continues to pump those weights and jump that rope. With each pound lifted and each turn of the rope, his strength, stamina, and most importantly his confidence builds.

Race is no fool by any standards. His experience alone shows that his command of the sport far surpasses most grapplers on the scene today. Maybe he knows something we don't.

"I know something Ric Flair and Bob Backlund don't know," says Race with a sly wink of the eye. "But they'll learn fast. Damn fast." □

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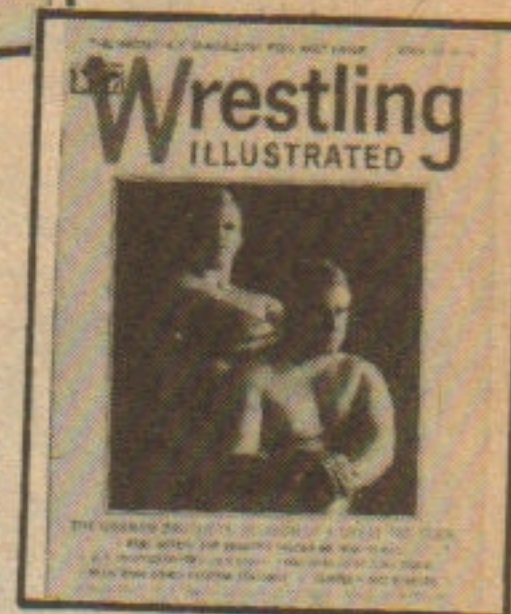
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JOSE LOTHARIO

(Continued from Page 21)



J.J. Dillion learns he should not try to interfere in the match (above) when Jose turns his attention to the manager. Toward the end of the match, it is Jose who appears to be in charge.

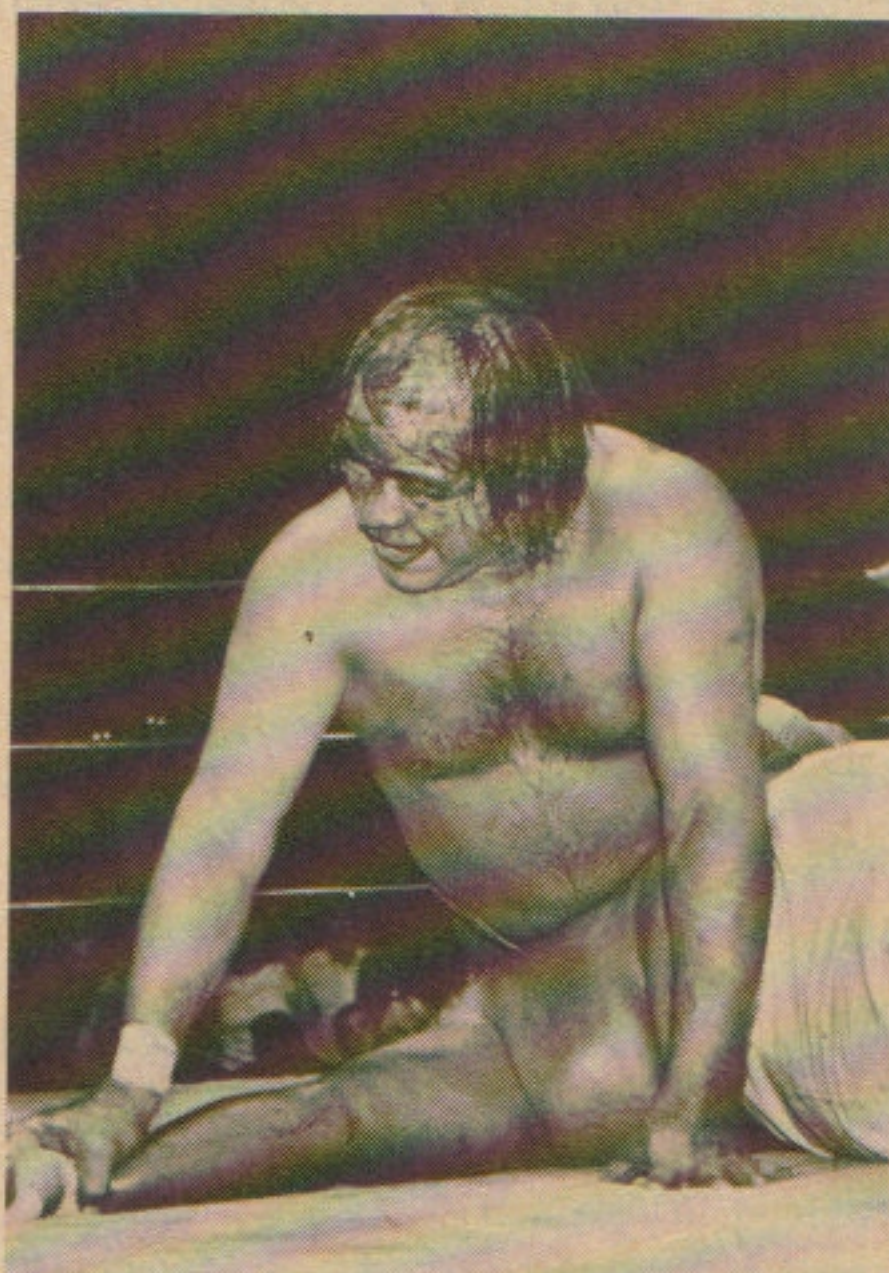
heard all the arguments, listened to the pleas. He thanked all for their concern. No one changed his mind.

"I can't explain why I'm doing this," Jose said. "Something inside me would die if I took the easy way. Then I'd be useless to myself and anyone else. If there was another way, I'd take it. But being a man does give you many choices."

The night of the match arrived. Abdullah was his usual terrifying self, grunting and scaring ringsiders. When he calmed down enough, there was a chance for Jose to enter the ring. Before the introductions, Abdullah attacked. Jose was sent sprawling from a forearm smash.

Lothario quickly scrambled to his feet. "Ring the bell!" he instructed. Obeying, the timekeeper clanged the match to an official start. What happened next will be remembered forever.

To describe the action would be like trying to report upon a barroom brawl. The two men



reason to make Abdullah his personal crusade. The chances for destruction were too great. Adullah could be taken on by others with less to lose. Wrestling needs Jose Lothario, especially during this reign of the rulebreakers. The wrestlers

were like crazed warriors at three in the morning, sick from liquor and rising bile making them mean. It's the kind of battle no one dares stop. There is something about these brawls that demands a conclusion, no matter how dangerous or bloody.

Tears filled the eyes of some fans as they turned away from the action. True to his word, Jose held nothing back. There were moments, instances of horror, when it seemed Abdullah would cripple him. But the superb wrestling machine that is Lothario escaped. He was hurt, but he could live with that.

Minutes passed by with terrible fury. The battering both men absorbed would have destroyed the average wrestler. Pain and exhaustion made them slow and almost awkward. The two sluggishly swung at each other, weariness making them stumble and lunge. Yet, neither man would surrender.

And then it was all over. Before anyone realized what happened, Jose marshalled all his strength and shoved Abdullah over the ropes. The grappler crashed to the concrete with a thud. Dazed, exhausted, broken, Abdullah didn't want to go back to the field of battle. The referee counted him out. Wordlessly, the hated grappler then ran back to the dressing room.

The match over, Jose's friends cried with joy. They weren't moved by the victory, but rather by their friend's survival. Jose had met Abdullah on his own terms and won. More than a victory, it was an affirmation of greatness.

Back in the dressing room, Jose lay in pain on the training table. Every joint in his body ached. The price of victory was very high.

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